PAKISTAN'S LOST YEARS

by

Z. A. SULERI



The author with Quaid-i-Azam at the press conference in London at Claridges in December 1946, after his historic and crucial talks with the British Cabinet which clinched the case for Pakistan. This picture appeared in *The Sunday Times*.

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Being a survey of a decade of politics—
1948—1958

by

Z. A. SULERI

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR:—

1. THE ROAD TO PEACE AND PAKISTAN—1944.
2. MY LEADER—1945.

"I congratulate you on marshalling facts so well and giving a clear picture of the seven years of our struggle. I was very much struck with this book and I have already written to the Lion Publications, and now urge upon you as the author of the book to see that it gets widest circulation and publicity amongst as many people as possible and particularly amongst Musalmans. I have asked for hundred copies. . . .I propose to send them to some prominent man here and abroad with my compliments."
(*Quaid-i-Azam in a letter to the author on* 16*th May* 1945).

3. WHITHER PAKISTAN?—1948.

—"(Mr. Suleri) is as acute an outside observer of the West as any the east has produced in recent years."

—THE LONDON
ECONOMIST

Dedicated

to

the memory of

ZAHID HUSAIN

CONTENTS

PREFACE

I have drawn largely on the *Evening Times* (October 1950 to May 1953) and *The Times of Karachi* (May 1953 to April 1959), which I edited during this period, for the recital and analysis of the events and developments in the first decade of Pakistan after the demise of Quaid-i-Azam on September 11, 1948. Hence quotations and extracts from those two newspapers become inevitable. It will be seen that the political vicissitudes of those years follow a coherent pattern of causes and developments. This era makes one whole. The Revolution in October 1958 started another.

I dedicate this book to the memory of the late Mr. Zahid Husain, the first Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan and the first Chairman of the Planning Board. I do so for two reasons. Of all the senior men reared up in the discipline of civil services whose inspiration lay in the conception of British interests, his was a mind full of curiosity, eager to learn, open to fresh thoughts and ready to orient his views in the light of new knowledge, never closed and wholly unprejudiced and completely absorbed in advancing national interest. Secondly, he showed great personal kindness to me and indeed befriended me at a time when I had no friends. Moreover, the friendship came spontaneously, without formality, arrangement or an external introduction, simply and entirely from his apprecia-

tion of thoughts I put in my book "Whither Pakistan" which was published in London in 1948. But for his unfailing encouragement and support I should have found it an impossible strain to bear some of the burdens which fell to my lot during the years of which I write in the following pages. He did not desert me even when there was a complete rupture between officildom, of which he was a part, and myself, especially in the months when I was being tried for sedition by Khwaja Nazimuddin's Government. It is difficult for me to express, in sufficient measure, the depth of my gratitude to him.

I cannot close this acknowledgement without a mention of my wife. My writings have been fashioned as much by her criticism as by her appreciation. I may not accept her advice but I cannot do without knowing it. An expression of thanks may be a small repayment of the debt I owe her, but its omission would be an enormity.

London, April 1962.

Introduction

Three factors bedevilled Pakistan's national life : continued preoccupation with constitution-making and the suspense caused thereby ; stalemate and stagnation in the political process and lastly confusion and uncertainty in assigning the place of Islam in the country's polity. Islam was involved both in constitution-making and party politics. Two questions arose : how much of Islam should be reflected in the constitution ? And what role should political parties play in creating an Islamic milieu in the country and achieving its aims ? The first year was of course spent mainly in setting up the hitherto non-existent structure of an administration. With the death of Quaid-i-Azam on 11th September 1948, barely a year after the country's emergence, the whole problem of constitution-making devolved on the first Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan. In order to satisfy the people's natural urge for Islam, he had an Objectives Resolution passed by the Constituent Assembly, which declared that sovereignty over the entire universe belonged to Allah and "the authority to be exercised by the people of Pakistan within the limits prescribed by Him is a sacred trust" and that "the Muslims of Pakistan should be enabled individually and collectively to order their lives in accordance with the teachings and requirements of Islam." But this resolution was not a constitution. Later in 1950 a basic principles committee composed

of members of the Constituent Assembly drew up a report recommending a general pattern of a constitution. It indicates the mood and temper of that time that the main criticism against it was that it did not give enough weight to Islam. There was hardly any comment on its other aspects, like relationship between the provinces and the Centre, which later became the principal theme. Liaquat Ali Khan succumbed to the criticism and shelved the report and the subject of constitution-making was never again raised in his lifetime. He died in October 1951. Thus tragically Liaquat Ali's regime, lasting over four years, was unproductive of a constitution. It is that failure which provided fertile ground for ceaseless disputation in the coming years.

The width of the gulf which came to yawn between East and West Pakistan in the process of the tardy and querulous constitution-making, may be gauged by the fact that the scheme of unification of provinces in West Pakistan was regarded by the Muslim League leaders of East Pakistan as a hostile act to that province. Nazimuddin's formula for relations between the two wings was rightly conceived in terms of parity, but that parity was negatived by divisions in the West which was further vivisected by the Basic Principles Committee's report. As it was, the solid and united East appeared in a position of dominance over the divided West, and effort on its part to unite in order to achieve balance and parity with the East was met with determined opposition by the Muslim League leaders of that province. Governor-General Ghulam Mohammed's action in dismissing the Nazimuddin Ministry did not neutralise that opposition. As the Constituent Assembly continued to exist and was

controlled by the dismissed group, all moves to amend the mooted constitutional proposals were frustrated. For instance, the new Prime Minister, Mohammed Ali Bogra, who had been accepted as the new leader of the Muslim League Parliamentary Party did not succeed in securing substitution of the rigid parity in both the houses (House of People and House of Units) by providing representation in the lower House on the basis of population and equal representation for the units in the upper House. The proposed amendment gave satisfaction to the numerically stronger East Pakistan and inspired confidence in the units, most of which existed in the West. The proposal could have created the balance which was intended implicitly by the principle of parity. The Muslim League leaders from East Pakistan did not countenance any changes in their original consitutional proposals. Indeed they proceeded to enact them. Helpless, even the Prime Minister gravitated to the majority. It was not until Ghulam Mohammed intervened again and this time more thoroughly and dissolved the Constituent Assembly, that any steps could be taken towards unifying the western provinces into one unit. The dissolution of the Assembly brought to the national scene new popular leaders from the freshly elected provincial assembly of East Pakistan. They broke the deadlock created by the Nazimuddin group and blessed and enforced western unity. But that of course happened after much damage had been done to east-west relations. This state of affairs was a far cry from the days when the Muslim nation defied all odds, of alien power, history, geography and above all the contemporary environs where the materialist philosophy ruled, to create a country in the name of Islam.

Timely action by Liaquat Ali Khan could have spared the country all these unnecessary travails.

The second factor bears on the political process. Here again the responsibility of Liaquat Ali appears heavy. The Muslim League reached its zenith under Quaid-i-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Its role was historic, its achievement unprecedented. While the independence of the sub-continent was predictable and was only a matter of time, the emergence of Pakistan was wholly unanticipated. Neither the British nor the Hindus had bargained for the partition of the sub-continent. Indeed if the Hindus were dreaming of ruling this vast land, the British were proud of having created a united India, and for long Muslim affairs were in a sorry state. The ambit of their hopes was exhausted by the demand of 33 per cent. seats in the legislature and the same quota in the services. From that dismal posture of begging for safeguards, in a short seven years under the leadership of the Quaid, the Muslim League had been able to wrest from the British and the Hindus the Muslim right of self-determination. No wonder the League was the first claimant to people's allegiance. Yet this mighty movement sank into limbo after liberation in half the span of its revival. Liaquat Ali was no doubt under much pressure of governmental business in the nascent days of Pakistan. And as it has become hackneyed to say, the country did start from scratch. No amount of administrative preoccupation however justified the neglect to which the great national organisation was consigned. Its neglect amounted to cutting the life-line of contact with the people. And since no other political organisation existed—

none was allowed to exist—the death of the Muslim League marked the end of the political process.

The third factor, Islam, was more complex. It shot through both the process of constitution-making and party politics. The unique and prominent aspect of the Pakistan Movement was precisely its appeal to Islam. The Muslims in the sub-continent woke up to the call of Quaid-i-Azam who was not a religious fanatic, because they felt that Islam was in danger of being inundated and overwhelmed in a united independent India by the forces of resurgent Hindudom. The Muslims understood the perils of their situation only in terms of Islam, even though they knew the socio-economic disadvantages Hindu-dominated India could involve for them. But then they had suffered such disadvantages because of their identity, because of their Islam. Thus the one word, Islam, and that is the only word which the Quaid invoked, embodied for the Muslims the meaning of their existence, spiritual, social and economic. Without that word, there was no Muslim League, there was no Pakistan Movement. Naturally therefore when Pakistan emerged, the Muslims wanted to live as Muslims in the sense that they could not live under the British or the Hindus, that is, under the supreme ascendancy of the values and laws of Islam. At once the question arose : what was an Islamic State ? And so started a theological disputation which has not yet concluded on a satisfactory note. Meanwhile the debate created a lot of confusion and worse, conflict, such as the *Khatm-i-nabuwat* (last prophethood) movement aimed at the expulsion of Ahmadis from the pale of Islam. Two schools of thought emerged, the orthodox to whom an Islamic State meant the revival of some

early period of Islam, and the modernists, to whom religion was a private matter, while the State stood on a secular pedestal. Of the two, the orthodox were, at least, more consistent. They were prepared to meet the logic of the Pakistan movement even if they could not convincingly argue whether their prescription of the Islamic polity was the correct one. The modernists shied away from the debate by taking up the attitude that Islam was merely a battle cry and the true causes for the demand of Pakistan lay in the fear of socio-economic domination by the Hindus. This negative attitude could not satisfy public sentiment whose image of the Movement was more positive.

Actually the truth seems to lie somewhere between the two standpoints. The orthodox are on unexceptionable ground when they assert that by fighting for Pakistan the Muslims were looking for something concrete toward the fulfilment of Islamic ideals. Anyone who has observed the Movement will testify to the truth of this statement. The curious fact however is that those who are foremost in the demand for an Islamic dispensation, the Jamaat-i-Islami of Maulana Maudoodi for one, were quite lukewarm about the Movement if not frankly hostile to it. They then argued that becoming good Muslims was a prior condition to demanding a Muslim State. If one were a good Muslim, they said, power would automatically accrue. After Pakistan's emergence they were relentlessly arguing that the success of the Movement demanded immediate Islamisation of the country's polity. The orthodox school suffers from a habit of arguing in a vacuum, that is, without taking into account the living reality obtaining in a given situation. It was the orthodox *ulema* of Deoband and other

learned institutions who made a frontal attack on Quaid-i-Azam for leading the Pakistan Movement, which their rich armoury of theological arguments easily proved to be against the interests of Islam. Some of the leading Muslim divines were on the side of the Congress, giving battle to the Muslim League, under the leadership of Gandhi and Nehru. Abul Kalam Azad is only one of the names among many of that rank. If Maudoodi, the leader of Jamaat-i-Islami, can now see so clearly that an Islamic State is the real climax of the Movement, it is reasonable to ask why could he not understand its purport before ? His contradictory stand is bound to create the suspicion that his logic for the Islamic State cannot be so flawless. The tragedy is that those who led the Movement, who really knew its meaning, did not make it clear. The Quaid died soon after partition. While he lived, he was a very sick man. Liaquat Ali made only a half-hearted attempt. After him, with the eclipse of the Muslim League, the field has been taken over by theologians, pure and simple, some of them, like the notable example of Maudoodi, did not sympathise with the Movement, much less participate in it.

While there is no getting away from the fact that the contents as well as the aim of the Pakistan Movement was Islam, the objective was not conceived in the sense that the dead theological arguments of the orthodox would have us believe. The Quaid reacted to the political developments in the sub-continent as an ordinary Muslim whose identity and personality stood in danger of being effaced under the Hindu Raj, which the British schemes envisaged. The Hindu domination threatened a Muslim in all the aspects of his life, his religion, his culture, his outlook of and on life. He was doomed to live

as an inferior person. Did not Gandhi call the Muslims a "body of converts"—that is, whose Islam was a foreign veneer which could be washed clean ? Did not the Muslims suffer under the British rule for no other reason than being Muslims ? Was not the Muslim system of justice abolished and his cultural language, Persian, replaced by English, at once rendering the most enlightened of Muslims illiterate ? The Muslims of the highest status were reduced to the position of pauper fishermen, as William Hunter has said in his classic *Our Indian Mussulmans.* The Quaid's fears have come true. What is the status of a Muslim in the Hindu- dominated India ? Urdu, the language spoken by a vast number of people, including Hindus, is not given the status of even a regional language, and for the simple reason that it is culturally associated with Muslims, about which Mr. Gandhi said that it was written in the alphabet of the Quran. One does not have to have a fertile imagination about the present-day political and economic opportunities for Indian Muslims. When the Kerala elections were won by the Congress in alliance with the Muslim League, the Congress caucus refused to give its Muslim partners a seat in the Cabinet. The president of Jamait-ul-ulema has bitterly complained that the educational system operative in the country was aimed at depriving a Muslim youth of all knowledge of his religion and culture. A Muslim is obliged to bear the prefix of 'Shri'—a purely Hindu term—so that we hear of 'Shri' *Mir* Ahmed Ali, which would have been considered quite insulting in the old days when the Muslim League publicists tauntingly addressed the Congress Muslims by that style. Thus the liberation of Islam from Hindudom and British rule was an opportunity for its 100

million children to breathe freely, to grow to their full stature. What is Islam but the body of Muslims ! The area of Islam shrinks with the diminution of Muslims even as it increases with their expansion.

The pivotal difference between Islam and other religions is that the former has no church, nor a priest-craft. The centre of its being is therefore not confined to the narrow precincts of a church and its expert devotees. Islam is co-terminous with the area inhabited by its followers. The foremost fulfilment of an Islamic Statehood is that it is composed of Muslims. The Muslims of Pakistan *ipso facto* make the State Islamic. Muslims go to make Islam and the land of Muslims is the land of Islam. The quality of Islam obtaining anywhere will of course depend on the quality of the people and here opens a field for intense spiritual and cultural cultivation of minds which must be looked after on all levels, State as well as private. The vital question however is that Muslims have to make a contribution in contemporary times if they wish to have a status in this world, as of yore. In that sense no nation can afford to live in the past. The glory of the past is gone with the past ; its importance today is merely historic. The period of an age is given. It is glorious in terms of its present situation, primarily for being progressive and ahead of its contemporary civilisations. A past civilisation cannot be resurrected in the present time because in terms of modern development it is out of date; it belongs to the past; it has minimal pull for the future. Those who will embrace it will equally belong to the past, incapable of making a contribution to and being felt by the burning present or the unfolding future. To be able to be ahead of others requires at the least to have a foothold

on the present. True greatness comes from understanding the future. Those who have a grasp of the future have a present. It is therefore not open to us to revive Islam in the sense of reviving any of its past periods. Whichever period we shall revive, that is begin to live, will inevitably throw us back to that point of history and we shall certainly have no future because we have failed to be linked with the contemporary age. It is however open to us to own the present, imbibe its spirit, and give the age an Islamic direction. That is a challenge and it was met by the pioneering Muslims. The Arabs dwelt upon Greek philosophy and gave it their own stamp of feeling and thought. From the ruins of the Byzantine and Persian empires they raised a great civilisation in the image of Islam. The Arabs brought their peculiar outlook to bear on their new environs and created a new world. If the Muslims now want a place in the future, like their forbears, they have to deal and work on the raw material available today. We have an example of such effort in modern times. The Russians heavily borrowed from Western sciences but have created a civilisation which is peculiar to their creed of Communism and therefore distinguishable and separate, already bursting out in directions unknown to the West. The Muslims can afford to do no less. Attempts at mere theorising is a luxury for which the world of action has no use. While therefore the orthodox are called upon to give up their beloved fetishes and face the world in the raw which can be made to harmonise with the urges of Islam only through ceaseless endeavour, *ijtehad*, the modernists have to give up their negative secular attitude. Whether or not one likes it, it is the Muslim values as such which face the challenge of modern forces, from West and from East. It is as Muslims that every

one of us will have to meet our destiny. This is a decree which cannot be changed. And since Pakistan, of all the Muslim countries, has found its being in its invocation of Islam, it cannot escape the responsibility of resolving its contradictions and clarifying its thought. The pragmatic, unorthodox approach of President Ayub Khan raises the hope that this unfinished task will be attended to in the spirit of awareness of our times and loyalty to Islam.

*The system of government which may now be evolved in Pakistan will have to respond to certain definite requirements. The failure of politics brought about a dangerous instability of administration. Foremost therefore is the objective of stability, which a consensus of opinion in the country believes can be achieved through a presidential system. An executive which is not disturbed by the vicissitudes in politics for a fixed term has the best hope of ensuring continuity and solidarity. Moreover history shows that Muslims have risen to great heights of energy and endeavour under personal leaderships. In this age, no government can hope to be effective without association with the popular will. That must be involved. The channels and forms of expression of this association need not however be those practised elsewhere. Islamic democracy primarily rests on a basis provided by the twin principles of "brotherhood" and "consultation." The Holy Quran emphasises the oneness of humanity by saying it is "born of one breath." There is no place for racial discrimination in Islam on any ground. As for "con-

*This book was written before the announcement and enforcement of the new Constitution by President Ayub Khan.

sultation" the Holy Prophet was commanded by God to consult the people in their affairs. The position of a head of a Muslim State is reinforced by the fact that he is the spiritual as well as temporal leader of the society, which is not divideh into tde spheres of Church and State. The terms 'theocracy' and 'secularism' are irrelevant to a Muslim polity for the simple reason that these arise from and belong to a purely Western situation in the Middle Ages, during the struggle of nascent national European States against the all-embracing authority of the Roman Church. The all inclusive unity of Muslim society needs must be expressed in terms of its own genius. This is precisely the challenge which faces the present revolutionary regime of Pakistan.

CHAPTER I

The First Prime Minister

The first decade of Pakistan after the death of the Founder, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah on September 11, 1948 until the Revolution on October 7, 1958, reflects the impact of the thinking and actions of five men, namely, Liaquat Ali Khan, Khawja Nazimuddin, Ghulam Muhammed, Choudhri Muhammed Ali and Iskander Mirza. Of these the first name is most important. Under Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan was set up not only the administrative machinery of the emergent state, which provides a true measure of his great work, but during his regime also developed those germs of national conflict which became apparent in later years and kept the country in a state of continuous political uncertainty and inviability for a long time. Liaquat Ali Khan's achievements are historic. Few nations and states have risen from the confusion and chaos which overwhelmed the partition of the subcontinent on Independence in 1947. It is on record that the Indian leaders were not reconciled to partition which was allowed in expectation that the tripartite constitutional agreement arrived at between the British, the Muslim League and the Congress would not actually crystallize into a living reality. This disposition is reflected in Field Marshal Auchinleck's

report of 28th September, 1947, which as Supreme Commander of India and Pakistan, he sent to London "by safe hand" and in which he set down, as John Connel says in his biography *Auchinleck* "for the eyes of the Prime Minister, the Chief of the Naval Staff, the C.I.G.S., and Chief of the Air Staff only, his considered opinion of the situation as a whole, six weeks after the transfer of power."

"There is no doubt" said Field Marshal Auchinleck "that, today, the communal feeling and tension between the two Dominions of India and Pakistan is so great that there is real risk of their becoming involved in open war with each other at short notice. I sincerely hope this will not occur....

"I have no hesitation whatever in affirming that *the present India Cabinet are implacably determined to do all in their power to prevent the establishment of the Dominion of Pakistan on a firm basis.* In this I am supported by the unanimous opinion of my senior officers, and indeed by all responsible British Officers cognisant of the situation. No one was originally more strongly opposed to partition than myself, if only for military and strategical reasons, but since H.M.G. made their decision and I was entrusted with the task of dividing the former Indian Armed Forces between the two Dominions, I and my officers have worked whole-heartedly and impartially to effect this. There can be no question as to the truth of this statement.

"*Before the transfer of power on August* 15 *the representatives of India forebore to show their hand and displayed generally a spirit of reasonableness and an apparent desire to co-operate. The meetings of the Armed Forces Reconstitution*

Committee were conducted in an encouraging spirit of co-operation and give and take.

"*Since August* 15, *however, the situation has steadily deteriorated and the Indian leaders, Cabinet Ministers, civil officials and others have persistently tried to obstruct the work of partition of the Armed Forces.* I and my officers have been continuously and virtually accused of being pro-Pakistan and partial, whereas the truth is that we have merely tried to do our duty impartially and without fear, favour or affection. That we have done this is universally acknowledged by all fair-minded people. This campaign continues and grows stronger and more vicious every day. *The Governor-General, Lord Mountbatten, is subjected to strong and unceasing pressure to abolish my headquarters, so that the one impartial body remaining in this country shall be removed.*

"So open and obvious are these attacks that there is not one of the officers of the Supreme Commander's H.Q., senior or junior, who is not imbued with the greatest disgust for and dislike of the creators of this state of affairs. It is probably fair to say that few, if any of them, would wish to take service under the India Government. They, like the majority, of their countrymen, cannot give of their best unless they are trusted and respected for their good faith. The Governor-General has done his best to check this campaign but with little result. *The authors of it are too strongly imbued with the implacable determination to prevent gaining their own ends, which are to prevent Pakistan receiving her just share, or indeed anything of the large stocks of reserve arms, equipment, stores, etc. held in the arsenals and depots in India. This is an*

*open secret. This being so, it is becoming increasingly impossible for myself and my officers to continue with our task. If we are removed, there is no hope at all of any just division of assets in the shape of movable stores belonging to the former Indian Army.**

"The attitude of Pakistan, on the other hand, has been reasonable and co-operative throughout. This is natural in the circumstances, as Pakistan has practically nothing of her own and must obtain most of what she wants from the reserves of stores etc. now lying in India."—(*Authors*).

It was no wonder, equally with the same objective, that Pakistan was not given her share of cash from the old central treasury. With the administrative machinery non-existent, armed forces unassembled and refugees pouring in, in their millions, it is not difficult to imagine the enormity of problems which faced the first Pakistan Government. Over and above this sprang the Kashmir conflict. That shape and order was brought out of this gravely disordered situation is a feat of leadership which must rate high. Primarily it was due to the inspiring presence of Quaid-i-Azam and people's own high morale, but Liaquat Ali had his share, a large share indeed. It was no empty boast when a year and a half later he advanced the fact of being in London for the Commonwealth Conference, away from the country, as a proof of its imperishable integrity.

Where did things then go wrong ? A satisfactory answer to this question is indispensable for a correct appraisement of

*"The British Supreme Command H.Q., was closed . . . before any appreciable quantity of the material had been transferred." (*The Making of Pakistan*, by Richard Symonds, p. 79).

developments during the first decade of Pakistan's existence. It is true that while he lived, the shadow of his great personality hid the nooks and corners of the developing malaise. Some of the bolder spirits who tried to throw light on those spots had to pay a price for their temerity. But the fact that they came to immediate view as soon as Liaquat Ali Khan was removed by the cruel hand of an assassin, demonstrates the pre-existence of those causes of national weakness which in the congenial climate of weaker authority grew to infinitely larger proportions. Under the monolithic character of the Muslim League, the parent of Pakistan, the Constituent Assembly, set up for the dual purpose of framing a constitution for the country and giving it a government, was a single party institution. As the leader of the League parliamentary party Liaquat Ali was the Prime Minister as well as the supreme national leader. Some political leaders might snipe at him for personal reasons but there was no rival to his authority in the land. After partition the Muslim League Council passed a resolution to the effect that no office-holder in the government could be the party's functionary. It was in obedience to that resolution that the Quaid, who was then the Governor-General, resigned the presidentship of the political organisation and Khaliquz Zaman took his place. In 1950 Liaquat Ali Khan caused a revocation of this prohibitory clause in the Muslim League's constitution and became its president. Thus prime ministership came to be combined with presidentship of the Muslim League. While this did not add much to his authority which was patent both in being the prime minister and a popular leader, the attachment of presidentship removed all possibility of a challenge. It made Liaquat Ali Khan's personal rule

complete. And insofar as decisions taken and policies initiated by him were readily approved by the League parliamentary party, the Constituent Assembly became more or less a rubber-stamping body. Imperceptibly, while the decline was setting in in the Assembly's authority as the national parliament, Liaquat Ali's assumption of presidentship of the Muslim League had the effect of reducing the organisation to a state of suspended animation. The rise of the Muslim League to a position of rivalry to the Indian Congress in the short span of seven years was an unparalleled phenomenon in political history. The reasons for this rise were obviously the leadership of Quaid-i-Azam and the magnificence of its cause, Pakistan. But there was also the mechanics. Branches of the organisation were set up all over the sub-continent. Daily agitation on all levels of national life was the norm. Leaders were touring from district to district and village to village carrying the League's message. Conferences were held throughout the year. The annual sessions were the high watermark of the organisation's dynamic existence. Council sessions were held regularly, and sometimes called to consider urgent issues. Above all the League executive was meeting frequently. There is not one decision taken by Quaid-i-Azam which was not endorsed by the executive and the Council. The democratic temperament of the leader was illustrated by an incident which is recorded by Campbell Johnson, the Press Secretary of the last Viceroy of India in his *Mission with Mountbatten*. When the Congress leaders had given their approval to the partition plan, Johnson tells us, Mountbatten pressed the Quaid to do likewise. The Quaid declined on the ground that the plan had first to be approved by the League executive and

then put before its Council. Mountbatten expressed apprehension that the procedure might take long and the Congress leaders might go back on their commitments and he might lose his Pakistan. The Quaid refused to be stampeded into giving his approval in advance of the Muslim League Working Committee and Council's approval with the clinching remark : "What must be, must be." The Plan ran the gauntlet of the League's executive and Council sessions. The Muslim League's strength lay in its contact with the people. The decline of the great organisation took place after Pakistan's emergence precisely because that contact snapped. Liaquat Ali was all in all but the League was nothing. The League ceased to matter because people did not encounter it ; it just did not exist, instead they met only officialdom. Since Liaquat Ali was a popular leader, his government basked in the sunshine of his personality. The hollowness of the League came to full view when he was no more there to cover it. Liaquat's followers in the office proved no more than mourners and pall-bearers of the Muslim League. They ruled without its pedestal.

The slow-motioning of the Muslim League under Liaquat Ali Khan was accompanied by another facet of his policy. No other train of political thinking was allowed to be set into motion. Any attempt at political organisation was condemned as treasonable. Noting this fact in an editorial the *Evening Times* wrote under the title '*WHY NOT OPPOSITION*' ?:

"Two points have been made against our plea for consciously developing an alternative leadership, an opposition.

Firstly that such a movement at this juncture will create confusion and chaos without producing a substitute for Mr. Liaquat Ali's Government. Secondly, that there is really no other man who can take the place of the present Prime Minister.

"In some ears these might sound forceful points. Actually they provide the basis of our plea. Mr. Liaquat Ali's apparent indispensability arises precisely from the fact that no concerted effort has so far been made to produce men and party to provide an alternative to him and the Muslim League. The reasons for this failure have been two ; one, the people outside the ruling party particularly among young people, have made no genuine effort to organise a party ; and two, the Government has spared no pains to discourage its crystallisation (Mr. Liaquat Ali has repeatedly stated that the country did not need another political organisation and that the Muslim League was the symbol of national unity, as if Britain and America had no national solidarity because these countries had more than one political party).

"We believe that if enough independent young men (we are anxious to hear new names) with convictions, courage and perseverance had come forward to serve their country in the political sphere—the most strategic sphere in the life of any nation in these times—there would have emerged not only a possible alternative to present leadership, but a check to the policy of drift and least resistance which Mr. Liaquat Ali's Government has come to pursue in all matters, but especially in constitution-making and foreign policy.

"Our critics don't seem to understand that the confusion

and chaos which might follow the fall of the Government can come about for reasons other than the challenge of an opposition. Too much reliance on one man will be absolutely fatal for the country in more ways than one. For instance, conceding that Mr. Liaquat Ali is the best of men available, is it not a fact that he is mortal ? What have we done to provide for his disappearance by natural causes? We for ourselves have believed that the Prime Minister was the most prominent figure in the country, but now only too clearly realise the danger inherent in such a belief and such a situation. No one man is enough for the salvation of a people and country. Moreover we have been greatly disillusioned in him since his assumption of the office of the presidentship of the Muslim League. We expected changes in the organisation, an electrification of the atmosphere. But nothing whatever has happened.

"Indeed the Prime Minister has not only effectively discouraged the formation of another party which might take over in the event of his eclipse—a possibility which all democrats, however powerful, must always visualise and provide for in the best interests of the continuity and solidarity of the nation—but worse than that he has squeezed the life out of his own organisation—the Muslim League. The result is that politically the country is dead and there is no life in it. The only thing that the country beholds is the Ministers and officials and their doings and misdoings. (Even literary activities, like the Iqbal Society, are being monopolised by them). And it seems to us that the only pleasure in life for the people consists in watching the prima donnas on the governmental stage.

"This silence on the political front, this lack of controversy on important national issues may present a scene of national unity ; but this is the quiet of the grave and when we fought for Pakistan we had not bargained for it. Our claim and aim was Renaissance. That implied an intensive intellectual activity, in politics, religion and sociology. But the strong hand of the Government had nipped it all in the bud. Immune against criticism, it is pursuing a policy which is not refreshed by any invigorating national debate. The Constituent Assembly is only concerned to rubber-stamp the decisions of the party caucus ; its members have a vested interest in its continuance for the privileges which it bestows upon them.

"In such a suffocating and stifling climate, anyone who looks beyond the gains of a mortal life and is enlightened by the faith that Pakistan is the new starting point of Islam, can only but cry out in protest and defiance.

"To our thinking, democracy is the essence of an Islamic future in Pakistan and other Muslim countries. We want the advantages of education, political life and social status to be distributed over the entirety of the nation and not monopolised in a few hands. This is the lesson of the tragic history of autocratic Muslim rule. Thus we believe there should be an opposition, which must first and foremost provide a check and corrective to the party in power. The concept of check and balance is inherent in all democratic constitutions and unless they are provided, there will inevitably develop tyranny, fascism and then fall.

"If an opposition were to come into being on the basis of an alternative programme and policy—it has to be or-

ganised some time—its immediate effect will be a revitalisation of the present Government and the Muslim League and eventually an alternative to take over from Mr. Liaquat Ali's Government if it falls, for one reason or the other. Opposition is thus an insurance against chaos and confusion. It will remove the very dangers which our critics fear most."

The voice of opposition however remained stifled. Thus the whole political process came to a standstill. But as a corollary of this situation another development took place. The suppressed political process found its outlet in factionalism in the Muslim League parliamentary party. Under Liaquat this factionalism did not harden into clear-cut grouping but the provincial delineation was already discernible. East Pakistan's pressure of demands on the Centre was increasing. This pressure gained momentum both because Liaquat Ali was elected to the Constituent Assembly from the East Pakistan Legislative Assembly and because the representation from that province was numerically stronger, 44 in a House of 76. Liaquat Ali also connived at a political alliance which was shaping between Nurul Amin of East Pakistan and Abdul Qaiyum Khan of the Frontier to the disadvantage of the other provinces. More than that the Muslim League leadership of East Pakistan was in desperate need of popularising itself against the influence of potent opponent forces which were crystallising around the formidable personalities of Suhrawardy and Fazlul Huq. This provincial factionalism proved the worst heritage from the Muslim League and burst upon the country in an avalanche of uncontrollable political fury on the death of the first prime minister.

Another failure on the part of Liaquat Ali Khan which became a source of grave national conflict was that he did not lay the foundations of a constitution. There are two reasons why constitution-making should have been finished in the first two or three years. In those days the pristine ideas and inspiration of the Pakistan Movement were fresh and alive. The sense of national triumph coloured the outlook and attitude of the people. The battle for Pakistan was fought to secure the survival of Islam in the sub-continent. It was as Muslims that the people had participated in the movement. The main objective was to gain recognition for the separate Muslim nationhood. The two-nation theory was the clarion call of the struggle. Once it was accepted, the rest followed. As a distinct Muslim nation, 100 million strong, they became entitled to the right of self-determination which was exercised to partition the sub-continent in the north-east and north-west. On the morn of Independence, therefore, Pakistan was overflowing with the consciousness and spirit of a united Muslim nationhood. The iron was hot to be struck into any shape or form. The narrower loyalties and motivations of provincialism had not raised their ugly heads. Secondly, the nation's destiny was presided over by the towering personality of Liaquat Ali Khan. His authority could have adjusted and fitted the various constituent elements of the nation into a harmonious picture of his choice. He did not realise the supreme desirability of framing a constitution at that time. The most sensitive years were thus frittered away and with it the will and spirit of one nationhood. It is true that Liaquat Ali could not have anticipated such an early death but the inherent provincial friction was already making

itself felt and he should have recognised the paramount need of binding the nation in firm constitutional ties without any loss of time. The need was as obvious as the aim of cementing the new frontiers of the country was clear. India's constitution was completed by November 1949. Instead he took up a very lackadaisical attitude. When the first Basic Committee Report was found wanting in popular appeal and met some mild criticism, he gave up the whole attempt. Meanwhile forces of disunity were gathering momentum.

One incident which occurred to weaken his authority towards the end was the publication in the *Evening Times* of 12th September, 1951, of a report that Radio Pakistan had made an effort to stifle Miss Fatima Jinnah's voice on points where she was critical of Liaquat's government. Miss Jinnah stood in the highest esteem among the people, not only as the sister of the Founder, but also in her own right for having taken a leading part in the awakening of Muslim women. It transpired that when Miss Jinnah was preparing her usual annual broadcast for the nation on Quaid's death anniversary, 11th September, the Controller of Broadcasting, Z.A. Bokhari, approached her for the script and felt unhappy with two critical sentences which he wanted to be deleted. Miss Jinnah refused. She went to the radio station to broadcast her talk which she thought went off smoothly. Actually it had not. It was noticed by listeners that the talk had faded out at two points which later were found to coincide with the critical sentences to which Bokhari had objected. It might have been the enthusiasm of the Controller of Broadcasting to serve his masters which drove him to fade those sentences, but the responsibility for the incident came to be fixed upon

the government as having engineered a calculated move to suppress the voice of one who was known as the Mother of the Nation. The country-wide agitation which followed did Liaquat no good. The government's long failure to explain the incident seemed to confirm people's worst suspicions. This silence helped to reveal the atmosphere of touchiness which came to surround the regime and the sycophantic attitude which officials had come to adopt. The inference was drawn that if it could happen to Miss Jinnah of all people, there was no one who could raise his voice.

In the political and constitutional vacuum hung the awe-some issue of Islam. Liaquat Ali was between two stools. He did want to satisfy people's urge for the achievement of an Islamic polity as promised by the Movement. The passage for the Objectives Resolution was an attempt in that direction. It solemnly declared :

WHEREAS sovereignty over the entire Universe belongs to Allah Almighty alone, and the authority to be exercised by the people of Pakistan within the limits prescribed by Him is a sacred trust ;

WHEREAS the Founder of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah, declared that Pakistan would be a democratic State based on Islamic principles of social justice ;

AND WHEREAS the Constituent Assembly, representing the people of Pakistan, have resolved to frame for the sovereign independent State of Pakistan a constitution ;

WHEREIN the State should exercise its powers and authority through the chosen representatives of the people ;

WHEREIN the principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance and social justice as enunciated by Islam, should be fully observed ;

WHEREIN the Muslims of Pakistan should be enabled individually and collectively to order their lives in accordance with the teachings and requirements of Islam, as set out in the Holy Quran and Sunnah ;

WHEREIN adequate provision should be made for the minorities freely to profess and practise their religion and develop their culture ;

WHEREIN the territories now included in or in accession with Pakistan and such other territories as may hereafter be included in or accede to Pakistan should form a Federation.

WHEREIN the Provinces would be autonomous with such limitations on their powers and authority as might be prescribed ;

WHEREIN should be guaranteed fundamental rights including rights such as equality of status and of opportunity, equality before law, freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship and association, and social, economic, and political justice, subject to law and public morality ;

WHEREIN adequate provision should be made to safeguard the legitimate interests of minorities and backward and depressed classes ;

WHEREIN the independence of the Judiciary should be fully secured ;

WHEREIN the integrity of the territories of the Federation, its independence and all its rights, including its sovereign rights over land, sea and air should be safeguarded, so that the people of Pakistan may prosper and attain their rightful and honoured place amongst the nations of the world and make their full contribution towards international peace and the progress and happiness of humanity.

But he did not want to play into the hands of theoreticians who had emerged to the forefront. The influence of the religious leaders in a movement fought on the Islamic basis can be easily imagined. The pull of Islam was so great that even political parties which had opposed the Pakistan Movement were gaining respectability through the simple device of joining the ranks of those who genuinely demanded an Islamic dispensation. Ahrar leaders anew exploited the question of *Khatm-i-Nabuvat* against the Ahmedis and aroused people's passion to a frenzy. But another reason why these protagonists of Islam became powerful was that while political leaders were absorbed in the rarified air of ministerial preoccupations, the religious leaders were in daily commerce with the people. Indeed the more the politicians receded from the popular arena the more it came to be occupied by these zealots, some of them of dubious integrity and intentions. One reason why the modernists, with whom Liaquat no doubt identified himself, did not do well was that they did not know how to face the logic of the Movement which put Islam on its banner.

Lack of clarity can never make a cause prosper. The upholders of the Pakistan Movement defeated their opponents because logic and clarity was on their side. That one could live as a hundred per cent Muslim only in an independent Muslim country was patently clear. Similarly it was clear that a Movement fought for Islam must fulfil its pledge. The modernists were on a weak wicket because they had not put out an intellectual exposition of their point of view without appearing hostile to the cause of an Islamic polity. All they did was to give expression to abhorrence of mullaism. Some took refuge in asserting that it was the socio-economic factors which were behind the creation of Pakistan, so that no obligation to implement Islam as such arose. This was an ostrich-like attitude, denying the very existence of a problem. The authoritative Liaquat could afford to dither, as he did and get away with it, but it did not help his successors.

Actually, the whole issue of Islam in Pakistan has failed to be put in a proper perspective. The basic point is that the contexts of situations for Islam are different and conflicting in the old undivided Indian sub-continent and the emergent Muslim State of Pakistan. In the Hindu-dominated context of India, Islam was a basis of nationality for the Muslims. They arose out of it in contradistinction with the Hindu nation. In Pakistan such a contradiction does not exist. The country is overwhelmingly Muslim. The Muslims face no national foe. Normally a Pakistani citizen is a Muslim. Pakistan has resolved the two nation theory which brought two nations into combat. Politically the present-day India is as Hindu as Pakistan is Muslim. The minorities in the two countries do not challenge the character which the ma-

jorities give to their respective States. This being so, Islam should be understood as having two facets. In the pre-partitioned India, it was the fountain-head of Muslim nationhood which won the right of self-determination. In Pakistan, in the religious sense, it can only be understood in sectarian terms. In a wholly Muslim society, invocation to sloganistic Islam is bound to arouse sectarian consciousness, which is the matrix of a man's personality. A Sunni or a Shia comprehesion of Islam will be different, even conflicting. When it comes to find an Islamic polity for the State, the two schools of thought are apt to recommend divergent prescriptions. It is difference in contexts which brings out different reactions. Islam gathered together Muslims of all sects and schools in the national struggle for Pakistan. The appeal was to the fundamental identity of Muslims and not to their individual beliefs. But in the Pakistani context it has a narrower, individual meaning, confined to the bounds of one's school of thought. Thus more emphasis on Islam puts a greater premium on sectarianism. It is in the name of Islam that the bloody events of the anti-Ahmedi agitation took place which well-nigh shook the country's foundations. In the old India Islam unified the Muslims; in Pakistan it may have the effect of dividing them into sects. In this light, even styles like Jama'at Islami are offensive insofar as they can imply that non-members have much less to do with Islam. For the same reason the Muslim League lost the lustre with which it shone in the undivided sub-continent.

It is lack of grasp of this change in the situation before and after Pakistan, that led to tearing controversies about electorates. The Muslim League leaders argued that the two-

nation theory decreed separate electorates for the minorities without realising that it hurt the cause of Pakistan's integrity and solidarity, which they of course claimed to defend. If, according to the two-nation theory, two nations inhabited the country, it was being exposed to division on the same basis that the sub-continent had been divided, namely, on a nation's right of self-determination. The difference was that while Muslims in the old India fought to wrest that right, they were of their own bestowing it on the Hindu minority in Pakistan. This highly unrealistic attitude is at the root of much of the confusion of thought which has prevailed from the beginning. Again Liaquat was the man who as second to the Quaid, could have clarified this ideological issue. Iqbal could have easily provided him with the guidance he needed. According to the philosopher-poet who gave shape to the idea of Pakistan in his famous Allahabad address to the Muslim League in 1931, the general body of Muslims is the most reliable factor for the determination of the direction of Islam in any given conditions.

Discussing the third source of Muslim Law *Ijma*—consensus—(the first and second being The Holy Quran and the Traditions) which he describes as "perhaps the most important legal notion in Islam" Iqbal says :

"It is, however, strange that this important notion, while invoking great academic discussion in early Islam, remained practically a mere idea and rarely assumed the form of a permanent institution in any Muhammedan country. Possibly its transformation into a permanent legislative institution was contrary to the political interests of the kind of absolute monarchy that grew up in Islam immediately after the fourth

Caliph. It was, I think, favourable to the interests of the Omayyed and the Abbaside Caliphs to leave the power of *ijtihad* to individual *mujtahids* rather than encourage the formation of a permanent assembly which might become too powerful for them. It is, however, extremely satisfactory to note that the pressure of new world forces and the political experience of European nations are impressing on the mind of modern Islam the value and the possibilities of the idea of *ijma*. The growth of republican spirit, and the gradual formation of legislative assemblies in Muslim lands constitutes a great step in advance. The transfer of power of *ijtihad* from individual representatives of schools to a Muslim legislative assembly which, in view of the growth of the opposing sects, is the only possible form *ijma* can take in modern times, *will secure contributions to legal discussion from laymen who happen to possess a keen insight into affairs*. In this way alone we can stir into activity the dormant spirit of life in our legal system, and give it an evolutionary outlook."*—*Author's italics.*

It is strange that in a country where Iqbal is as highly revered as the Quaid, his advice on such a pivotal matter as the evolution of an Islamic polity in Pakistan was not heeded. Iqbal's assertion that Muslim "laymen" "possess a keen insight into affairs" was fully demonstrated in the struggle for Pakistan, against which were pitted some of the most learned orthodox institutions and persons while the ordinary Muslim folk marched behind the Quaid. Laws and thoughts emerging from a representative body of Muslims, according to Iqbal,

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*Reconstruction of Thought in Islam, p. 173.

provide a true foundation of a progressive Islamic polity ; thus Muslim society moves forward with the heritage of the past, combining the two pivotal principles for the survival of a cultural entity, namely movement and conservatism. Whether or not it was intentional, Liaquat was inclined to follow the example of the Omayyed and Abbaside Caliphs who left the "power of *ijtihad* to individual *mujtahids*" thereby putting a premimum on monopoly and conservatism. It was to this trend to which, later, Nazimuddin gave constitutional sanction by appointing a board of divines to arbiter on whether legislation was Islamic or anti-Islam in import. Politically perhaps Liaquat's policy was sound ; it did silence the divines into support of the Prime Minister. But at the same time his real purpose of putting Pakistan on a modernistic basis to express the Islamic spirit, was defeated. After him the institution became the source of great mischief. Thus Liaquat bequeathed three sources of conflict ; political stagnation ; constitutional void and confusion of thinking about the place of Islam in Pakistan. From Oct. 17, 1951 onward, the history of the country mirrors the growth and fructification of these germs of conflict.

CHAPTER II

The Beginning of the End

In the story of the decline of the pristine Pakistani spirit over the decade, Khawja Nazimuddin's eighteen months' premiership marks the steepest fall in national morale. Provincialism filled the air. Regional considerations supplanted the national outlook. He made matters worse in whichever direction he moved. His very act of assuming office was unprecedented in parliamentary history. He became Prime Minister on the death of Liaquat Ali even while he was Gonor-General. It was not clear who nominated him to his new office, except himself as Governor-General. Strangely enough, constitutionalists and legalists who abound in the country and are always ready with comments, let this occasion go unavailed. Perhaps it was due to a feeling, in the shadow of the great tragedy of Liaquat's death, that Nazimuddin, as an old lieutenant of the Quaid, was the best man to command the people's acceptance. Which indeed he did, to begin with. He started his new career with all round goodwill. It was however clear from the beginning that the new Prime Minister was heavily dependent on advisers and it might not be wrong to describe his premiership as "the advisers' regime." His leading advisers seemed to be his own brother, Shahabuddin,

then Governor of North-West Frontier Province, Commerce Minister Fazlur Rehman, East Pakistan Chief Minister Nurul Amin and the editor of *Dawn*, Altaf Husain.

Nazimuddin's regime must also be judged on the three counts which have been enumerated in the appraisal of Liaquat's stewardship of the country. Politically, he helped to deepen the waters of stagnation. First of all he had to be elected leader of the Muslim League parliamentary party. That is to say he reversed the procedure followed by Liaquat who was elected the leader of the party before he assumed the office of Prime Ministership. He then sought the presidentship of the organisation. Since he was not qualified for that not having been a member of the Muslim League for a year as required by the Party's consitution, (he was the head of the State since 1948) a Council meeting was called for the twin-item agenda of amending the constitution and electing Nazimuddin as the new President. Having been elected President, he omitted to do the next important thing, namely, to name his Working Committee. Throughout his term of office as Prime Minister he did without a League executive. To that extent therefore the Muslim League became a good many degrees less alive. Thus in a more literal sense than Liaquat, Nazimuddin became the embodiment of the organisation and the process of personal rule became completer still. This wholesale authority was qualified only in the sense that its operations depended on the activity of his advisers, who were very active indeed. Concentration of power in one or a few hands did not however make the regime more powerful or popular with the people. Even when political activity had come to a standstill in Liaquat's days, he successfully depended for his authority

on his personal position of unrivalled popularity with the people. In the case of Nazimuddin, absolutism had the effect of suspending him in a vacuum of complete detachment and distance from popular opinion. He seemed to stand on a pinnacle without a base. Liaquat could stand on his two feet like a Colossus, without the need of the League's prop, but without the League's prop, which he had folded up, Nazimuddin's elevation appeared wholly illusory. The vacuum around the Prime Minister was filled by his advisers and the government's policies were coloured by their outlook and understanding. Personally Nazimuddin was regarded as above provincialism—there was not one line of criticism in newspapers in West Pakistan on his assumption of office. But the same could not be said about his advisers, among whom Chief Minister Nurul Amin had made himself especially prominent for criticising the Centre which he identified with the West, for maltreatment of East Pakistan. The growingly provincial outlook of the Nazimuddin regime and the artificiality of the Muslim League's existence were given clear expression at the Dacca Session of the Council in October 1952. Two further amendments of the consitution were adopted. The first amendment made elections of the organisation's office-bearers triennially instead of annually. Although the League's elections had for long become farcical to the rump Council which had no roots among the people, yet they enforced the necessity of an annual session. The new amendment did away even with that formality. The distance between the ruling caucus and its own limited followers was made stark and clear.

It was however the second amendment which expressed

and embodied the essence of the provincial struggle which had come to characterise the Nazimuddin regime. According to this amendment, the composition of the Council was put on the basis of provincial quota rather than on grounds of genuine strength of the party in any given area. The seats between East and West were divided on the principle of parity. East Pakistan was allotted 327 seats and the same number were distributed among the provinces in the West. This amendment had far-reaching consequences. Having already secured a three-year term as President of the provincial Muslim League, Nurul Amin became master of half the representation in the national organisation. And since those East Pakistan seats in the Council had no bearing on and relevance to the real strength of the Muslim League in the province, they were indeed a gift to Nurul Amin for distribution among his own personal followers. While the amendment did not oblige him to spread and popularise the organisation, it gave him power to pack the Council with his stooges through whom he could boss over the entire organisation, a probability which was easily provided by the division of Western provinces. These amendments were declarations of the hollowness of the organisation and the narrow provincial spirit which was motivating its policies. The hollowness of the Muslim League became manifest at the first general elections in East Pakistan in the spring of 1954 which resulted in the complete rout of the Party. Nurul Amin was defeated by a mere boy of a student. The provincial spirit was reflected in the constitutional pattern which was produced by the Basic Principles Committee. The Dacca Decisions had the effect of making Nurul Amin the real boss of the Muslim League

on whom Nazimuddin came to depend for strength and support in the organisation. And since Nurul Amin was primarily absorbed in provincial politics in which he was set in aggressive competition by the bid of Suhrawardy and Fazlul Huq, his entire approach to national issues was narrow and provincial. It was that provincial approach which inspired and determined the process of constitution-making with disastrous results.

The constitutional pattern was made public on 22nd December, 1952. It was all too clearly created in the image of the Dacca Decisions which bestowed authority on Nurul Amin in the Muslim League organisation. There was to be parity of seats between East and West in both the Houses of the Federal parliament. The otherwise unexceptionable principle of parity became obnoxious to the West in the circumstances of its divisions. If the West remained divided, it could not command equality with the one united entity of East Pakistan. Actually the divisions in the West were enhanced by the Basic Principles Committee by creating more units like Khairpur, Karachi etc. which stood on a par with big provinces like Sind and the Punjab. The publication of the Report started a country-wide storm. The *Evening Times* wrote a number of articles subjecting the constitutional proposals to a searching and critical examination. They led to the arrest and imprisonment of the present writer on charges of sedition. He was not granted bail for three months. The case was later discharged by the Sind Chief Court.

CHAPTER III

In Retrospect

It might be worthwhile here to go through some of the extracts from the *Evening Times*' articles which aroused the Government's wrath.

(1) On the *DACCA DECISIONS* the paper wrote :

"Since partition, the development of this national Muslim organisation has become an acute problem. To begin with, its new role marked a complete departure from the old one, of opposition, the League became a Government party, and its leaders had to learn to shoulder responsibilities not only of running an administration but of creating a new one. The best minds were naturally absorbed in this gigantic task and there is no doubt, considering the huge problems which Pakistan faced at her birth, they did a good job of work. That however was achieved at the cost of the organisation : the structure of the Pakistani statecraft no doubt arose above the clamour of all disputes, tension, uncertainty and hostility, but the Muslim League progressively sank to a position of neglect, insignificance and abject servility to the behests of the Government. Not only did it suffer organisationally, worse still, it failed to evolve and acquire a new outlook. While the

cessation of the League activities caused a steady recession of leaders to a growing distance from the people, its failure to cultivate a new philosophy brought the thinking classes in particular, into a sort of mental conflict with their Government.

"It was the realisation of this dangerous gap that made the late Prime Minister step in and take over its presidentship. We welcomed the change, but were soon after disillusioned in our hopes. Even the foreceful personality of Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan could not be a substitute for a new outlook, clear principles, well-conceived policies and a thorough overhaul of the machinery of the organisation with a view to bringing it into an intimate contact with those whose representative it claimed to be. Last year, the new Prime Minister became its President, but its stultification has persisted. The fourth Council session was predicted to be the beginning of a new era. The promises have been certainly kept, if all that was meant was the introduction of new amendments, but we are afraid they will have the effect of further tying down the national organisation to the apron strings of a few bosses—a situation which is fraught with dangerous consequences, particularly when there is no rival popular organisation worth the name.

"The basic urge of a modern democratic order is the achievement of a close contact of the people with their rulers through the instrument of a political organisation. It is in this elemental test that the Pakistan League has thoroughly failed. The fact that there has been no open general annual session—a most popular feature of the old All-India Muslim League—during the last five years speaks for itself. The four Council sessions which have been held so far, have been mainly

concerned with amendments in the Constitution for one reason or the other. The first thing by way of bringing back the League to life was to think of ways and means of introducing it into the lives of the people. Now, that certainty cannot be achieved by removing elections to an interval of three years, which has been done by an amendment at Dacca. Thus the urge which elections supply to go out and seek the support of the common people has been deadened. For at least three years, the world and all therein belongs to the newly elected office-bearers. By one simple amendment, the leaders of the League have made their links with the people as tenuous as they could. They do not like to suffer people's approval every year, which might by and by result in the people's refusal to suffer them as their representatives.

"The greatest blow to the organisation has been dealt by another amendment, which has established a principle of parity of representation in the Council between East and West Pakistan. What is the meaning of it ? We can understand the reservation of seats in the Parliament for any particular geographical area according to its population—thus East Pakistan may have what its population warrants—but such a provision in a political organisation is fantastic and touches the height of absurdity. Ordinarily, a political organisation has the largest contingent of representatives from an area where it is most strong, that is, where it exercises the strongest appeal. The organisation is not composed on the basis of the population of any area but on its own membership there. If a certain branch of a political party has 20,000 members in an area, say A, where the population is not much larger than this number, then it is bound to have more re-

presentatives in its national council than an area, say B, where the population is twice that size but the membership of the branch of that same organisation is only half. Representation in the central assembly of a political organisation, does not, therefore depend on the general population of the area in which it operates, but on its own strength.

"The Dacca Amendment has decreed a revolutionary dispensation and set at naught all the familiar canons of political organisation. According to it, it matters little where the League is stronger, the representation in its Council will be in proportion to the general population of that area. Thus even if the League membership of Karachi is four lakhs out of a population of 11 lakhs, quite a possibility in view of the greater political consciousness here, it will not be able to compete with the one-lakh League membership of the entire N.-W.F.P., for while Karachi has been allotted 11 seats, the Frontier has been given a quota of 58 seats on the basis of its total population. Thus Mr. Nurul Amin, who with 327 seats in his pocket emerges as the strongest boss in the League, need have no worry about the position of the League in his province ; he can have his 327 members of the Council elected either on the basis of 10 votes or 100 votes each, as he pleases, and need not enrol more members. He is, according to the Amendment, under no compulsion to widen the scope of League activities. He is not under the stress of any competition from any other province like the Punjab, where, as it is, the League is the strongest political organisation, but which cannot return more than 184 representatives to the Council, even if it registers its entire 1.84 crores on the rolls of the Muslim League. The leaders at Dacca have therefore adopted an ingenious method

of putting premium on inactivity, lassitude, and killing the organisation, a surprising development in view of the proclaimed consciousness that the League had steadily grown less representative and urgently needed revitalisation.

"The Dacca session must indeed go down in the history of political parties as the most successful in creating bosses without followers and generals without troops. That the representatives of West Pakistan, who at this session commanded a majority according to the old constitution, supinely supported the Amendment will certainly not redound to their credit as the servants of the national organisation. Henceforth, we shall hear less and less of the League activities, for the bosses have been elected and they are well pleased with their success, whatever might be the fate of the organisation. Mr. Nurul Amin will no doubt throw his weight about east and west, but that will not mean that the League will pull as much weight among the people.

"That such far-reaching amendments have been introduced and passed at a single session without any previous notice or discussion in the country points to the essential rot in the Muslim League, where decisions are dictated by the short-sighted considerations and prejudices of a coterie, in complete secrecy and disregard of the wider interests of the organisation." (15-1-52).

On the *PROBLEMS OF CONSTITUTION-MAKING* it wrote :

"Another aspect of our constitution which needs careful thought relates to the question of the Legislature and represen-

tation of various units therein. The point has gained crucial importance since the Dacca Session. If the principle of parity—which incidentally makes nonsense of all principles of political organisation—is a foretaste of what is going to be the basis of representation in the Parliament under the new Constitution, then we cannot sufficiently mourn the lack of statesmanship, vision and complete disregard of national interests on the part of those who participated in that Session and supported the Amendment, which to our great disillusionment included Khawja Nazimuddin, Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, Mian Mumtaz Daultana, Mr. Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani and Mr. Abdul Qayyum.

"The principle of parity has been conceived by little minds, by persons who cannot see beyond their noses, whose mental horizon spreads no further than the thoughts of their jobs. Analysed in plain arithmetic, parity means that East Pakistan will be a dominant party and need have only a few votes more from pliable persons here and there, and can perpetually form a Government, and even if the Prime Minister is not a Bengali, any other Prime Minister will have to be sustained by the preponderant number from East Pakistan. The results of such a dispensation will be extremely dangerous.

"..........if East Pakistan is placed in a position of such advantage, the nation as a whole will cease to be the electorate of Pakistani leadership, its dominant Bengali element will naturally regard East Pakistan as the entire field of their activities. Since it is the voters in East Pakistan who sustain them, Bengali members of Parliament, its dominant element, will look to them for support, and it will be from

the standpoint of their interests and requirements that the Government will frame the policies of the country. An outlook will thus prevail at the Centre which will be exclusively partisan. Contrary to the need for a Pakistani outlook in the nation at large and at the Centre particularly, we shal live under the governance of a parochial outlook.

"Therefore the principle of parity is fraught with dangerous consequences. The overall national good calls for a different solution : it calls for a constitutional prescription which would put the Bengali group of representatives under the stress of seeking Punjabi, Sindhi or Sarhad support in the formation of a national Government : and *vice versa.* It is more imperative under the present one party system. When political parties come to be founded on a socio-economic basis, they will naturally cut across geographical boundaries in pursuit of their programmes.

"What could possibly be the reason behind the principle of parity ? Firstly, it is unmistakably the short stature and small calibre of the present Bengali leadership. Mr. Nurul Amin is practised in the art of threats, he would do this, that or the other if his say is not accepted. The restraint of the late Prime Minister having been removed, he is naturally more assertive. His own position being weak in the province and along with him the position of the League, he feels the dire need of permanent props for his declining influence. That is well done by the contrivance of parity. Thus he can keep the Centre in awe on the one hand and bribe the people of East Pakistan to his support for the dominance he promises them." (10-11-52).

PAKISTAN PARTITIONED was the title of the article which discussed the report of the Basic Principles Committee.

"The basic principle which has governed and guided the thoughts of the members of the Committee is illuminated by the fact of a permanent partitioning of the country which has been embodied in the Report. It appears that the Committee was not seeking to express, in a constitutional framework, the hopes and aspirations of the people which, for it, do not exist, as such, but to devise an uncomfortable alliance between two countries which are otherwise quite independent and jealous of each other. The entire thinking has been conditioned by the concept of East and West, the only difference between the two being that while the former has been conceived in its present consolidated form as a single unit, the division in the West has been augmented by a moth-eaten pattern of nine units. Accordingly a principle of parity has been evolved for adjustment between the two and worked out so religiously in the structure of the Federal Legislature, that Section 44 lays down : "The representation of Kashmir and Junagadh (if and when they join Pakistan—our comment) in the House of the People and the House of Units should be determined by the Federal Legislature by law, but not so as to affect the parity between East and West Pakistan in either House."

"The betrayal of the struggle for Pakistan is so completely achieved by this document, that we feel called upon to refresh the minds of Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, who was a close lieutenant of the Quaid-i-Azam, and Khawja Nazimuddin, who has laid repeated claims to follow in the footsteps

of the late Prime Minister, about some facts which turned the moribund All-India Muslim League into a mighty mass movement. The whole motive behind the renaissance of Indian Muslims was to secure an independent homeland in the sub-continent : we fought and succeeded as one nation, as Pakistan was born of the struggle of this nation : it was the Muslim people who brought it about, whether some of them belonged to the Punjab, Madras, Bengal or the North West Frontier. It is not the provinces of Bengal and Punjab which made Pakistan. The subservience of the provinces in the scheme of things is obvious from the fact that the sub-continent was divided precisely in terms of the Muslim and Hindu nation. In the context of the Pakistan struggle, therefore, the primacy lay on the Muslims as people and not their habitat of Bengal and Punjab. If this is so, how is it that only five years after the emergence of Pakistan, the people have been relegated to inconspicuousness and the constitution is being framed in terms of a geographical alliance between East and West ? What is the cause of this fall, this degradation and this distortion?

"We have from the beginning advocated a unitary form of Government for the country which would embody the concept of one people, one language and one administration. Our reasons are historical...Since Pakistan is the fulfilment of a single, indivisible movement of thought and struggle, its unitary character is beyond dispute, in contradistinction with say, the USA which came into being through a desire on the part of certain States which had a sovereign existence of their own before they federated for some specific subjects. Here provinces had no independent existence before partition,

indeed three of the most important ones had themselves to be partitioned in order to admit and acknowledge the inexorable logic of the Pakistan Movement. The distortion of this true picture began when the term 'federation' was put into currency, as if Pakistan had the same historic background as America, Australia or Canada. It is no accident that the talk of federation became voluble only after the departure of the Quaid-i-Azam. We objected to the concept of federation because it was not true to the unitary character of our struggle, it raised the provinces above the people. Now the Basic Principles Committee would have us believe that the people as such never entered into the picture of the Pakistani Movement : it is the provinces of the East and West which joined to make Pakistan. This grotesque vision of our struggle has found such favour with the Committee that what has emerged is incapable of any precise definition in modern constitutional parlance. It is difficult to escape the thought that this degeneration has developed after the departure of yet another national figure, Liaquat Ali Khan. Let us analyse.

"According to the report, Pakistan will be a federation, which ordinarily means an arrangement between constituent units on the basis of perfect equality, as in a federation primacy lies on the units and not on their population, large or small. Starting with the concept of federation, it became inevitable for the Committee to provide a House of Units along with a House of People. Ordinarily , it would mean that while the House of People, the lower House, would be elected on the basis of the population of the various units (as in the USA) the House of Units would be composed of an equal number of representatives from each unit. But

the Basic Principles Committee has rejected this notion. Obsessed with the idea of parity between East and West, it has provided that while in the House of People there should be 200 from East and 200 from the nine units of the West, even in the so-called House of Units, there should be 60 from the East and 60 from the other units of the West. Thus the basis of population has been equally incorporated in the House of Units against all recognised principles of federation, that the Units should be regarded equal whatever be their respective population, which can be reflected in the other House.

"Now what is the motive behind this queer dispensation ? What are the considerations which have gone into the bearing of this constitutional monster ? According to this arrangment one party is made permanently dominant over the other, in complete disregard of the requirements of balance between units which is the crux of a federal constitution. East Bengal's 200 in the House of People and 60 in the House of Units against the division of an equal number of seats between the nine units of the West give the former a position of such complete command over the other, that one shudders at the reaction this recommendation is likely to arouse. The horizon is indeed made dark with suspicion. The principle of parity between East and West is made so sacrosanct that no hesitation or qualm of conscience is felt even in providing that, in future, if Kashmir or Junagadh—there might be others—join Pakistan, (obviously the West) their joining should not disturb the equality of representation between the two zones. That is to say that if tomorrow Kashmir becomes part of West

Pakistan, the Federal Legislature might enact a law to give it a representation of say, 5 seats. These 5 seats must either be found from the quota of West Pakistan or if they are to be added to its number, then a corresponding increase of representation will occur in the case of East Bengal. Parity must persist. Many more areas might join the West; millions of refugees might pour into it; its indigenous population itself might increase by leaps and bounds, but it can never, never be allowed to out-represent the East. This is the decree! (22-12-52).

In the editorial entitled *WHAT THEN* ? the Report was further discussed.

"The greatest failure of the Basic Principles Committee Report lies in the fact that it has set minds moving in provincial grooves. It was inevitable. When the entire approach of the Committee was conditioned by a deep anxiety and endeavour to accord exclusive recognition to one province over the rest, the reaction of the other provinces is bound to be an effort to guard what they conceive to be their peculiar interests. It is broadmindedness which begets broadmindedness. If the rulers had set an example in large, national thinking, the people would no doubt have responded in similar terms. As it is, we are doomed to face the provincial music. What then ?

"For our part, we do not think that the mischief of the Report is beyond repair. A little adjustment can yet make it acceptable to the large majority of our countrymen, whose fond hopes still rest in the direction of making Pakistan a

model of a new nationhood, set on principles of ideology rather than of race and geography.

"Having abandoned all hopes of a unitary Government, we are confronted with the concept of federation. But the Report is defective precisely in the fact that it has only flirted with the term of federation and has not achieved it in its recommendations. Two points are fundamental to a federation : firstly, primacy lies on the constituent units and not on their respective populations, and secondly, their invariable equality in the legislature irrespective of their size in any regard. As a great authority on constitutional law asserts, what creates a federal state is "the desire for national unity and the determination to maintain the independence of each man's separate State." The aim of federalism is to give effect to both these sentiments. The very fact that a sharp reaction has set in against the principle of parity, which is a monstrous violation of the spirit of federation, demonstrates the truth of our statement that the federation of the Committee's conception has not satisfied the basic requirements. How can a federation work in the face of such opposition ?

"In a unitary state where people are regarded as one and are the ultimate sanction behind the state and where a majority of votes count supreme in all decisions, it may be allowed to disregard minority opinion even if it is large and is concentrated in one area. But not so in a federation, which can be constituted only if ALL the units as units agree and not even 99 per cent of the aggregate votes will make anything valid if even one unit comprising of the remainder one per cent of the population objects. If Pakistan were

conceived in terms of a unitary State, it was sufficient for the Committee to have behind it a majority of the people, even if that majority came entirely from one area. But in the face of their claims to make a federation the Report has to be approved by every unit, for it is they who have to federate and even one of them, however tiny, can frustrate its acceptance. Consistent with the claims of the Committee, the proper thing would now be to refer its recommendations to the legislature of every unit and have it approved. But if it is not to be sent out of the Constituent Assembly, then the representatives of the various units will have to record their votes separately—there can be no such thing as the party discipline of the Muslim League, compelling collective voting. Such a thing can happen only under a unitary form of constitution and we are devising a federal framework. It is clear that according to this arrangment, the Report cannot pass muster in its present shape.

"What then is the adjustment we have in mind ? In the first place let the federation be a true one. There should be two Houses, one of the People and one of the Units. But instead of having them both elected according to parity between East and West, the House of People should be elected on the basis of population, recognising Bengal's natural superiority of numbers. The House of Units should be drawn from all the units in equal representation. Both the Houses should be equal in power and the Government of the day should be composed from members of both of them. In case of conflict, joint sessions should be held. This arrangement will produce the necessary psychological balance which is the crux of the matter ina federation where units' patriotism

is married to overall national interests. The priority of the idea of population in the House of People will be counter-balanced by the priority of the idea of units in the other House. East Bengal will have more representation in the former and the Units of the West will be stronger in the latter.

"Another thing. Through this arrangement, we might yet resurrect the idea of a common nationhood which has been laid deep down in the earth by the Committee. The idea of domination by any zone having thus been removed, it is to be hoped that the future rulers of the country will not come so much from this area or that, but from this party or that party, which would transcend provincial boundaries by the sweep of their programme. It is only under this arrangement of equality of units that there can be the prospect of a party system ; as it is, parity compels people to think in terms of provinces alone." (24-12-52).

In the article *MAXIMUM AGREEMENT* the paper said:

"The Prime Minister has commended the Basic Principles Committee Report to the nation as representing the "maximum agreement". One might ask: Agreement between whom ? In the first place, the character of the Constituent Assembly has become most unrepresentative. Any elected assembly loses its mandate after five years of existence. Ours has so many errors of omission and commission to its credit, that it has completely lost influence with the people. Its decisions can command acceptance among them only if they are in accordance with their wishes, particularly decisions which bear on the fundamental question of the country's constitution. Agreement between the members of the present Constituent

Assembly therefore does not have force of those of a newly elected body who can recommend its policies as the people's will, for they hold a fresh mandate from them. The present antedeluvian Constituent Assembly can now make its policies acceptable only if it takes into close account public opinion, from which both the Assembly and the rulers drawn from it, are situated at a distance of secure isolation.

"Secondly, are the recommendations of even this small body—the Basic Principles Committee—unanimous ? What about the resignations of members so eminent as Choudhri Mohammed Zafrullah Khan, Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed Gurmani, Sardar Bahadur Khan, Choudhri Nazir Ahmed, Malik Firoz Khan Noon, Dr. Umar Hayat Khan Malik and Begum Ikramullah ? Is their secession any part of the "maximum agreement" ? How can a document whose line of development caused so many resignations—for which no explanation whatever has been offered perhaps to boost up unanimity—be said to embody a "maximum agreement" ?

"Again, agreements are between parties. Particularly on the question of parity, there must be two to make an agreement. Now let us take it that on behalf of East Bengal the signatures of Maulvi Tamizuddin Khan, Khawja Nazimuddin, Mr. Sris Chander Chattopadhyaya, Mr. Fazlur Rehman, Mr. Prem Hari Barma, Mr. Kamni Kumar Dutta and Mr. Nurul Amin are as good as gold. But who has signed on behalf of Sind (the co-opted legal remembrancer surely cannot deliver goods on behalf of Sind), Baluchistan, Bahawalpur, Khairpur and Tribal areas ? As for Punjab, at the last meeting of the Basic Principles Committee when the signing ceremony

took place, only three members from the province attended, from amongst whom Mian Iftikharuddin walked out in protest that his minute of dissent was not incorporated in the Report and we hear that Malik Shaukat Ali has also wanted to append his disagreement. The only willing signature was of Syed Khalilur Rehman, who is a Minister of State for Defence. Mian Muhammed Mumtaz Daultana and others did not even attend the meeting and although his signature appears on the Report without his being in the Capital, it is subject to a minute of dissent on two vital points. The reaction of the province has however been carried in unmistakable terms in the Press and he will be a bold man who will dare support the Report in the face of such intense public opposition. In any case, the absence of Punjabi delegates at the League Conference called by the President is eloquent of the mood of the Punjab. In the cirumstances, what is the value and worth of this "maximum agreement" ? As it becomes apparent from the overwhelming membership of the Committee, the Report can only represent the sentiments of East Bengal. There is no other party to it." (26-12-52).

In the article *A PLEA FOR LOGIC*, the paper concluded:

"It sounds strange to hear those who are the most persistent preachers of "faith, unity and discipline" voicing opposition to the Punjab Chief Minister's plea for a unitary pattern of constitution in Pakistan, for nothing can forge unity in the country as it could. We have all along advocated this pattern. Indeed we believe that any other dispensation would be a deviation from the path that the Movement set for us. As we have often pointed out, Pakistan is born of a

single, individible Movement : it did not come about as a result of some agreement between the provinces some of which had indeed to be partitioned solely in order to conform with the requirements of this Movement. Now is it not a fact that we have a sovereign Legislative body, upon whose power to pass law, there is no restriction whatsoever ? This is the hall-mark of a unitary system, for the unitary British Parliament is not weightier than ours.

"This fact contrasts sharply with a situation where a federal system has to be adopted. There, no such sovereign, all-powerful body can exist. The federal legislature is brought into being by the delegation of sovereignty by the federating units, which pre-exist the federation, and that sovereignty is strictly limited to the subjects that are vested in the Federal Centre. Thus the federal legislature can only legislate within a strictly defined area. But here we have an assembly, which is all-powerful ; it can scrap the provincial autonomy of the 1935 Act by a single amendment to that Act whenever it chooses to do so. That is to say a unitary pattern exists. A demand for it merely means a confirmation of an established fact.

"That Mian Mumtaz Daultana should have been ridiculed for asking the Assembly to reaffirm what already obtains is a reflection on the degree of deviation that minds have now accepted from the original idea of Pakistan. Actually, a unitary system also meets the demands of the Bengali leaders ; their insistance that population should be the basis of representation in the Central legislature would have had full response, without evolving the most unnatural innovation of

parity. This, besides partitioning the country into two competing blocks, has for all time to come damned the numerical strength of the West even if it rises, as it is bound to rise in the coming years, not only because there is a vast unpopulated area here, but also because many more refugees may pour in, if not on account of the accelerating birth-rate alone.

"We must however admit that after the pace that has been set by the Basic Principles Committee Report, the chance of having a unitary system has become dim, and Mian Sahib's voice is no doubt now like a cry in the wilderness. The next thing, of course, is a federation but here the nation will insist on a true pattern of federation and not the hotch-potch of the Report. The ironical part of it is that the Report's recommendations can be set right by a very slight amendment to the clauses bearing on the structure of the federal legislature. That is, the composition of the House of Units should be based on equality of representation and equality of functions and powers with the House of People. Moreover it should equally contribute to the formation of the Government of the day and it must be directly elected. The House of People, on the other hand, should reflect the population of various areas and on that ground East Bengal must have a larger number of seats. In the event of deadlock, both the Houses should sit jointly.

"We have repeated this amendment *ad nauseam* and if even this does not find favour with the authors of the Report, it must be due to a kind of perverseness which will call for a last-ditch resistance from the people. But if it is accepted, for

our part, the main hurdle to our agreement with the Committee on fundamentals, would have been removed. Whatever other changes we might advocate in the Report will be of lesser import." (30-12-52).

CHAPTER IV

Dacca Decision to B.P.C. Report

From Dacca Decisions in October 1952 had in fact started a swift movement of events which culminated in the publication of the Basic Principles Committee report on the 22nd December. Since the general pattern of recommendations had become known, an air of political crisis was already spreading over the national horizon. The Government took all steps to suppress leakage and criticism. It was made an offence under the Official Secrets Act to make any forecast about the Committee's recommendations. Section 144 was imposed on meetings and demonstrations in Karachi. Nazimuddin spoke of measures against the Press. *Dawn* complained that the Prime Minister was not showing enough guts to suppress the non-conformist Press. The whole plan was that the Basic Principles Committee's report should be enforced with the least opposition. Its recommendations should be rushed to the statute book before the public had any time to react to them.

It so happened that the Government's precautionary measures did not produce the desired effect. The views ex-

pressed in the *Evening Times* had general agreement and therefore wide repercussions. The Punjab Press had become sharply critical of the Central government. It had also become public that many of the Punjab members of the Committee including the Chief Minister, Mumtaz Daultana and the Central Minister of the Interior, Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani and Choudri Nazir Ahmad had dissociated themselves from the Report and their signatures were not available. Indeed it came to be known later that only 16 out of the original 29 committee members had signed the Report.

In order to give the fullest and simultaneous publicity to the Report and also to gain immediate acquiescence in its recommendations, the Government's publicity-advisers, among whom Altaf Husain of *Dawn* figured prominently, called an all-country editors' conference. The Conference was scheduled for the forenoon of December 22nd. Editors from all over the country attended it and heard the Prime Minister, Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar and the Information Minister, I.H. Qureshi commending the Report for acceptance and approval. The Conference turned out to be a very stormy affair and from the Government's point of view, a flop. The official plan for the Conference seemed to be that discussions on the Report be diverted towards those of its provisions which were considered to bear on the Islamic character of the State. Nazimuddin had a marked predilection towards an Islamic bias in the State and had for that reason gained popularity among orthodox circles. In fact he had gathered round him a number of prominent *ulema* of the old school who had helped him draw up some of the Islamic sections of the Report. He was sure that were those sections highlighted in the Press,

they could lend an acceptability to the Committee's Report in general. The more shrewd of his advisers also hoped that once discussions started on the Islamic sections, not only would it prove inconclusive and infructuous, the inevitable discursive debate at the all-important editors' conference would have the merit of screening from the public view and mind the more mundane but decisive and significant sections defining the relationship between the provinces and their representation in the central parliament. In a way the discussion on Islam would provide a smoke screen and a camouflage for the passage of the substantive contents of the constitution.

This plan misfired for the simple reason that the purport of the recommendations had already become apparent. The *Evening Times* had written an editorial entitled : "PAKISTAN PARTITIONED" for that day, subjecting to severe criticism the plan for the federal assembly which had the effect of vesting supreme and unadulterated power in one province. To the utter surprise and amazement of Nazimuddin and his colleagues, the Conference started on a strident note of critical examination of the provision of parity. No sooner were questions asked on this aspect of the Report than the whole atmosphere became charged with an earthy debate concerning the share of the provinces in the parliament and the equation between East and West. What was the true definition of federation ? What was an unitary state ? Did the Committee's recommendations conform to any pattern of known constitutions ? These questions set the direction of the discussion. Some of the Government supporters tried in vain to distract the discussion into Islamic

channels. The political core held attention throughout and the Prime Minister looked distraught and extremely unhappy. The conference had boomeranged.

Where did the mischief of the Committee's provisions about relations between East and West lie ? As it has been stated before it was mainly inspired by provincial considerations. The principle of parity as such was quite sound ; the country being bi-zonal it is of the essence of national harmony that a balance between the two zones be maintained. But the principle turned vicious and anti-national because it did not really aim at creating equality between the two wings. True parity implied automatic unification of the West ; a divided West could not stand up to a solid and unified East. Actually the Committee's recommendation split the West further ; its old four-fold division was increased to make 9 units. Thus the West stood in perpetual inequality and discord to confront the solid East. The principle of parity was made still more unacceptable by introducing it in the upper House of Units as well as in the lower House of People which was against all canons of federalism. There were only two alternatives of dealing with the situation. Either the West be also made a single unit to compare in harmony and solidarity with the East or federation on the American line be introduced, with two houses, one reflecting population of the various provinces and the other equality of the units, both enjoying equal powers. In that event while the lower House would be controlled by East Pakistan, the upper would be under the control of the Western provinces. The pattern recommended by the Committee neither adhered to the

principle of true parity nor of true federation, even though the Committee showed such an obsession about it that it did not even give a moment's thought to the unitary system which might have provided a more satisfactory solution.

CHAPTER V

Nazimuddin's Dismissal

The effect of the sedition trial against the present writer was not good for the Government. The action was taken in an atmosphere of general disapproval of the constitutional proposals of the Basic Principles Committee, especially in the West. Many of the Punjab members of the Committee had resigned. The Punjab Chief Minister, Mumtaz Daultana, whose signature appeared, appended a minute of dissent. Thus the Government's action against the *Evening Times* which had taken a prominent part in opposing the constitutional proposals, had the air of vindictiveness. Calling to aid the outmoded law of sedition was itself odious. The British made use of that law in India because in the nature of things the executive was irremovable. In an independent country where a party system obtained, it was fantastic to hold criticism of the party in power as seditious. That was indeed the main point of Justice Lari's judgement. The manner in which the arrest took place and the refusal of bail for three months did not either commend itself to public approval. Even the *London Times* commented : "The most disquieting feature remains the power to keep an unconvicted man in jeopardy for so long on so flimsy a pretext." It was a remarkable de-

monstration of public feeling that in protest against the arrest the entire national Press closed for one day, including *Dawn* which was the foremost spokesman of the Nazimuddin regime, and certainly a bitter opponent of *Evening Times.* It was the first and last time the Pakistani Press acted in complete unison. The Government's position was indeed desperate. But the chain of events had started much earlier.

It is clear that the changes in the constitution of the Muslim League effected at Dacca in October, 1952 extending the terms of office-holders to three years and introducing parity of representation between the East and West in the Council, had the set purpose of achieving provincial domination and all obstacles were to be put out of the way. It was in that aggressiveness of spirit that Din Mohammed, the then Sind Governor, was dismissed on the 29th October 1952. *Dawn* carried an editorial entitled "Governors". It sounded odd. There was no gubernatorial conference meriting a comment. The editorial was short and vaguely worded. But at the tail was tacked on a single sentence reflecting on the Sind Governor's "failure". It was an illogical conclusion, and came like a bolt from the blue. Knowing *Dawn's* closeness to the Prime Minister the only inference that could be drawn was that something had gone awry between the Central Government and the Governor. *Dawn's* editorial was in the nature of providing a justification for the action which the Central Government might be contemplating. That evening, the *Evening Times* carried the story that the Governor had been dismissed, solely on the basis of the *Dawn* editorial, without any other source of information. Such was the charged atmosphere of those days that the

conclusion was not unwarranted. It transpired that the day before the *Dawn* verdict had appeared the Governor had a stormy interview with Prime Minister Nazimuddin. The Governor did not seem to give satisfaction to the Central authorities in pursuing the given political line. It so happened that ten months earlier the Sind Ministry, headed by M.A. Khuhro had been removed and the Governor was ruling the province under the 92A provision of the constitution without association of any political party. Although the Muslim League Party was in power before the dismissal of the Sind Ministry, it was under the faction led by Khuhro, with which the Central caucus was not pleased. Now the Governor was engaged in preparing the province for elections. He was doing this with honesty and detachment and was impartially meeting leaders of all hues and kinds, including the leaders of the down-trodden *haris*, the have-not tillers of the land. The deposed Chief Minister, M.A. Khuhro, was himself a factor to be reckoned with in the province. There was danger that in free and fair elections someone might come to the helms of affairs in the province who might not prove pliable, as indeed Khuhro had not. And so there was need for some kind of pre-election manoeuvrings which would result in the emergence of a man acceptable to the Centre. To those manoeuvrings Din Mohammed refused to be a party. And therefore he had to go. A *Dawn* attack on him was launched as a softening up process in order to facilitate government action. It might even lead to the Governor's voluntary quittal. For if Din Mohammed remained in office after the Central Government's accredited mouthpiece heaped on him the humiliating verdict of "failure", he could have continued

only in ignominy. For a man of the outstanding ability and character of Justice Din Mohammed, there could be no other choice. The calculation was correct. Following the newspaper's attack he offered to go on leave to which he was entitled and indicated that he would not resume governorship after the expiry of the leave. But for the *Evening Times'* exposure the matter would have passed off quietly with no one the wiser for it.

The exposure put the Government in an awkward position. It appeared guilty of conspiring with *Dawn* for the dismissal of the Governor. It showed itself to be cowardly for it had all the authority to do away with an officer who did not please it. What is worse, while in response to the Press clamour the Central Government did issue a Press note dissociating itself from *Dawn* as its authoritative spokesman, it did not ask the Governor to withdraw his request for leave, which had been made entirely in protest. The bad faith behind the newspaper's attack was clear from the fact that it had earlier repeatedly praised Din Mohammed for his stewardship of the province. As late as 1st October, 1952, it was saying: "Not only the people of Sind, but the entire people of Pakistan will support the Governor of Sind, Mr. Din Mohammed, in his move to get the Sind Frontier Regulations repealed and *jirga* system of trial abolished. The present Section 92A regime in Sind has been responsible for a number of liberal legislative and administrative measures calculated to improve the conditions of the province."

In the fast spreading climate of provincialism, the dismissal appeared in the light of provincial vengeance—Din

Mohammed hailed from the Punjab. The issue was taken up over the entire West Pakistan and the prospects of a national outlook guiding the shaping of the country's constitution became darker still.

While Nazimuddin's efforts at constitution-making were meeting heavy weather, his open identity with orthodox *uelma* created its own dangers. Liaquat might have patronised them for political reasons. In any case he always had the upper and controlling hand by virtue of his commanding position in the public. But Nazimuddin's alliance with them was an act of an unthinking zealot. He was instrumental in providing in the constitution a "board of *ulema*" outside the parliament which could vet its legislation in the light of whether or not it was Islamic. This is a provision which Iqbal considered dangerous. Nazimuddin conceived the image of an Islamic state in terms of a simple revival of some laws and practices without the least notion of the nature and challenge of the contemporary world. No wonder he became popular with the orthodox *ulema* who surrounded him and whose thinking and outlook were clearly discernible in the so-called Islamic clauses of the constitution proposed by the Basic Principles Committee. And among the issues for which, under the influence of these *ulema*, he showed sympathy, was none other than that of the explosive *Khatam-i-nabuwat*, which aimed at ousting Ahmadis from the pale of Islam, because of their denial of the basic principle that there could be no prophet after the Holy Prophet. The so-called anti-Qadiani movement, which later had to be curbed by the force of Martial Law, was headed by some of those *ulema* who had gained the confidence of the Prime Minister. The whole episode has

been the subject of an official enquiry which came to the conclusion, among other things, that the provincial government of Mumtaz Daultana was not innocent of association with some of the hot heads. It is equally true that Nazimuddin's patronage of *ulema* was often a source of great encouragement to the leaders of the anti-Qadiani movement, to whom the Prime Minister appeared as one of them. Indeed the difference between the provincial Chief Minister and the central Prime Minister appeared only to be this, that while the former's support was implicit and surreptitious, the latter's was clear and manifest. That is not to hold him responsible for the actual turn of those bloody events, though to his clever advisers the movement might have appeared as a godsend, in that it had the effect of diverting the public mind from the constitutional provisions, bearing on the relationship between the provinces in the federal parliament, which could then, in confusion, pass muster.

The stark fact of the whole situation was that the clash between the central and provincial government was not between two different parties, but between two parts of the same party, the Muslim League ; Nazimuddin was the president of the Central Muslim League and Mumtaz Daultana was the Chief of the provincial Muslim League. What needs to be noted is the *casus belli* of the conflict between two parts of the Muslim League. That could be no other than the dominating influence in the Muslim League's central leadership, which had expressed itself in the lopsided constitutional proposals creating imbalance between East and West. The cleavage in the leadership on this question was shown by the resignations and abstentions of the Western members of the

Basic Principles Committee. The only member from Punjab who signed the Report, as it was, Khalilur Rehman, a junior minister in the Central Government. Mumtaz Daultana, as the enquiry report into the Punjab disturbances averred, might have tried to turn the tide of the anti-Qadiani movement's fury to the central capital, Karachi, but the movement had in no small measure received its impetus and force from Nazimuddin's favourable attitude and disposition to the *ulema* around him.

Actually the Punjab disturbances not only showed confusion of thinking on an Islamic dispensation in the country and the atmosphere of provincialism which surrounded it, but above all the paralysis and disintegration of the national political organisation which created Pakistan. The League had, as noted before, become moribund in the time of Liaquat Ali Khan. Opposition was not allowed to exist and the party in power itself did not function. Having given birth to Pakistan and a leader, Liaquat Ali, it lay exhausted and prostrate. The public position of the leaders of the Muslim League depended not so much on the vitality and popularity of their party but on extra party manoeuvres and alliances. Not only did Liaquat Ali encourage closer association between East Pakistan's Nurul Amin and Frontier's Abdul Qayyum Khan, but he was reported to be in touch with the erstwhile enemy of the Muslim League, Attaullah Shah Bokhari, the redoubtable Ahrar leader. Nazimuddin followed the same course but widened his association among the orthodox *ulema*. The all-sects *Khatam-i-Nabuwat* Committee which launched the anti-Qadiani movement comprised persons, not only the associates of Nazimuddin but also the leading members of

the Ahrar party which gained increasing strength by capitalising on this issue, as indeed it had done in the Thirties. Daultana more or less navigated the same course. He also mixed with and encouraged Ahrar leaders for the sake of gaining popularity. Now all this kow-towing of Muslim League leaders with their former political foes was done for the simple and elementary reason that their own party and organisation did not give them a sure foothold in public estimation. It was dead and valueless. Its carcase was useful only in providing a path into official positions. In order to secure a position with the people, they needed other props. Those props were outside the League ; more often they were made of the old anti-Pakistan elements like the Ahrar. Impotent in themselves, the League leaders at the Centre and provinces were seeking rejuvenation from any organisation which had set itself in authority in the political vacuum left by the Muslim League. It was a situation similar to that facing degenerate conquerors who came to depend on alien elements for their sustenance in power but whose power was sham for that very reason. Without popular backing, the League leaders sought outside help, through alliances and to the degree they got that help, they had to succumb to alien influences. The *Khatam-i-Nabuwat* movement was a classic example of pure political opportunism, indulged in equal measure by Nazimuddin and Mumtaz Daultana.

It was against this background of political bankruptcy and provincial chauvinsim that on 17th April 1953, Governor-General Ghulam Mohammed dismissed Nazimuddin from prime ministership.

CHAPTER VI

G.M's "Brave New World"

Ghulam Mohammed is perhaps the most controversial figure of this period. The tasks that fell to his lot could hardly make him popular. As Finance Minister he acquired a power over government departments and therefore over ministers which irritated many. In Liaquat Ali Khan's Cabinet he was the second most powerful man. That position was keenly resented by politicians, for Ghulam Mohammed was a non-political outsider, belonging to the old Indian Audit and Accounts service, who became Pakistan's First Finance Minister only because the Qaid-i-Azam chose him. His first balanced budget earned him the title of "Financial Wizard". It was indeed wizardry to have produced a balanced budget at the very first go, because it was confidently predicted by the enemies of Pakistan that if on no other account, the country would go on the rocks on the simple ground of economic inviability. But it is as Governor-General that he will appear as standing at a turning point. He did no less than change the course of developments in constitution-making as it had developed in the previous five years, especially since the death of Liaquat Ali Khan. As a man,

Nazimuddin will be known as a gentleman, but as Prime Minister he came to preside over a policy which, had it been carried out, would have spelt the ruin of national unity. Ghulam Mohammed's manners might appear brusque ; his act of dismissing Nazimuddin might have dubious legal basis, but the fact remains that his action had the significance of halting the destructive trend which the country was taking under the aegis of the Nazimuddin government. Gossip had it that when Nazimuddin complained to Ghulam Mohammed about his dismissal and said that as Governor-General he had always behaved correctly to Liaquat Ali Khan, the latter replied : "Come, come, Khawaja Sahib, you are neither Liaquat Ali nor am I Nazimuddin." Whatever happened later—, the concept and prescription of constitution inspired by the Nazimuddin group did not prosper. What enhances the significance of Ghulam Mohammed's action are the host of disabilities from which he suffered. In a state of severe ill-health, he could not walk straight and the whisperings of his faulty speech could be understood only by his closest circle of associates. He was not a popular leader, capable of appealing to his following, yet he possessed the will to act. Will was the only element in his frail being which worked with unimpaired integrity.

It has been contended that Ghulam Mohammed acted unconstitutionally in dismissing the Nazimuddin Ministry. That the spirit of the Indian Independence Act of 1947 did place effective authority and power in the Prime Minister,

the head of the majority group in the parliament, is undisputed. Yet the letter of Section 10 also made the ministry's stay in power dependent on "the pleasure" of the Governor-General. The action might therefore be against the spirit of the Act, but it was in consonance with the letter of Section 10. The real justification of the Governor-General's action came from the demonstration of the acceptability of his choice, Mohammed Ali Bogra, with the same Muslim League parliamentary party whose leader Nazimuddin was. That party elected Mohammed Ali Bogra as its leader. Had it stuck to Nazimuddin and rejected Bogra, Ghulam Mohammed's action would have been in fact proved to be illegal and unconstitutional. The crux of the matter lay in the Muslim League party's approval of the Governor-General's action.

Legal and constitutional quibbling apart, Ghulam Mohammed's action has to be judged on its merit. It cannot be denied that Nazimuddin's policies had bitterly divided the country. The overwhelming majority of West Pakistan was against the constitutional proposals of the Basic Principles Committee. The majority of the people of East Pakistan were disgusted with the Muslim League government. They wiped out the party from parliamentary life at the first opportunity they had at the general elections in the spring of 1954. The anti-Qadiani agitation of which Nazimuddin cannot be regarded as innocent, had added further fuel to the fire of political turmoil which was overtaking the country. That normally Ghulam Mohammed was quiescent and acted as a constitutional governor-general is shown by the fact that for about eighteen months, from October 1951 to April 1953, he did nothing. Indeed he gave the government public support on

many occasions. One cannot say what advice he was privately giving to Nazimuddin, but he seemed quite content with the political process as it was working itself out. There is no evidence that he once intervened in constitution-making. And it is quite possible that if the consitutional proposals of the Basic Principles Committee had not aroused such intense resistance in the West and the anti-Qadiani agitation had not called for the imposition of Martial Law, Ghulam Mohammed might have been well content with his life of elevated inactivity. His innate inclination to least resistance is shown by the events which followed the premiership of Mohammed Ali Bogra. At the time when he was considered to be an all-in-all dictator and Bogra was looked upon as no more than his creature, he took no positive action to follow and enforce a clear cut line on constitution-making. Indeed he let things drift, so much so that after another eighteen months, in October 1954, the same group comprising Nazimuddin, Nurul Amin and Fazlur Rehman whom he had sought to make ineffective, had mustered enough strength to move the Constituent Assembly to deprive the Governor-General of all powers of Section 10 and allied sections of the Government of India Act 1947 under which he had dismissed the previous ministry. This does not show that Ghulam Mohammed had a dictatorial frame of mind or embraced any clear political philosophy. Indeed his easy-going disposition might well prompt the criticism that having taken action he did not pursue his objective of normalising the national situation by the production of a constitution with enough thoroughness and alacrity. The move for the unification of the West with which he is associated came almost tentatively. The West had reacted against the

notions of parity which the Nazimuddin group had put at the heart of the Basic Principles Committee's Report. It answered neither the requirements of a unitary system of government nor of federation. Parity in the Upper House of Units as well as in the Lower House of People was unprincipled and could be construed as a device to ensure permanent supremacy of the Eastern wing. A few months after Mohammed Ali Bogra had taken over as the Prime Minister he appointed a caretaker committee to thrash out a proposal which envisaged that the two houses should be drawn on the basis of equality of units in the upper house and population in the lower and be equal in power. This device meant satisfaction to East Pakistan for it had a larger population and to the West because it had numerous units. Had it been done, the Report could have been accepted. The Nazimuddin group opposed it tooth and nail and the proposal was defeated. Only then was aired the idea of Western unification as the only alternative, that is to say that it was not a positive political demand of long standing ; it arose out of the intransigence of the Muslim League leaders of East Pakistan and their refusal to accept any amendment to their original conception of parity. "Either unite West Pakistan and divide the country into two equal zones on the basis of parity" wrote *The Times of Karachi* of September 25th, 1953—after about six months of Bogra's prime ministership—"or forge a true federation of the American type."

Although much has been made of Ghulam Mohammed's arbitary powers, the truth was that no sooner had the Constituent Assembly met than the helplessness of the Governor-General became quite obvious. For, in the Assembly the

Muslim League party was supreme. It elected Mohammed Ali Bogra as the new leader but that was about all. The Nazimuddin group remained strong on two grounds. Firstly it was powerful in the party itself. The only opposition was provided by two members from the Punjab. The Hindu group which hailed from East Bengal felt bound to support Nazimuddin on provincial issues. They were on the same side on the language question when Bengali was declared to be the State language. The group also had their connivance when it engineered the denudation of the Governor-General of his powers. Thus while the Prime Minister was a nominee of Ghulam Mohammed, he had no control over the party which sustained him in office. The Nazimuddin group, of which the ex-Commerce Minister, Fazlur Rehman, growingly became the main spokesman and strategist, fully exploited this position. The group was of course powerfully backed by *Dawn* whose editor sat on its brains trust. The result was that even moderate and eminently reasonable proposals such as the aforementioned amendment of the Basic Principles Committee's constitutional recommendations could not get through.

This was a ridiculous position when one considers that the representatives from East Pakistan did not possess a grain of authority after the complete rout of the Muslim League at the provincial elections in the spring of 1954. Actually Fazlul Huq, the leader of the United Front, which won the elections, lost no time in demanding fresh elections to the Constituent Assembly from that province. That demand was frustrated on the legalistic ground that elections could not make any difference to the position of the Constituent Assembly which possessed the supreme authority

Legality apart, who could persuade the group to commit *hara kiri* ? They could however have changed their attitude in view of the revolution that had taken place in that province especially and in the country as a whole. The whole tragedy lies in the fact that they did not budge physically or in mental outlook. They refused to learn and reflect on the changes that were taking place around them. The distance between their attitude and the public mind was made clear when not only was the Muslim League defeated and uprooted in East Pakistan but the parties which replaced it endoresed the scheme of Western unification. The One Unit Bill was drafted by the Awami League leader, Hassan Shaheed Suhrawardy ; it was enacted with the support and votes of Fazlul Huq's United Front Party.

When the Naximuddin group in the Constituent Assembly rejected the Representation Formula evolved by Prime Minister Bogra, the movement for the unification of the West took real roots. It became clear to western thinking and politically conscious minds that the only way that the West could develop in terms of equality to the East was to be unified. Equal voice in the parliament raised on a solid united basis could alone induce East Pakistan to meet the West in a spirit of accommodation. So long as loopholes of division in the West remained available, there could be an urge among the irresponsible to exploit them. The fear was real because the East Pakistan representation was also composed of non-Muslim elements whose influence and authority far outweighed their numercial strength. That influence could be kept confined to the East only through Western unification so that the bonds of Islamic relationshionship which knitted

the two wings together and were indeed the basis of Paksitan's emeregence, could have a fair wind of consolidation and development.

Under the title "*A WESTERN UNIT*" *The Times of Karachi* wrote on the 20th August, 1954,

> "Equality between the Eastern and Western units will restore national balance. The idea of taking advantage of disunity in the West will disappear, thus removing national suspicions. More than that the position of the Hindu minority is adjusted to its proper size. In harmony and accord, without aspiring and conspiring to dominate each other, the two parts will develop equally to their rightful position."

But when the demand was pressed, the Nazimuddin group was more than ever determined to oppose it. Being in authority in the Constituent Assembly they could easily do this. They played on the fears and suspicions of smaller units in West Pakistan. The sub-committee which was set up to examine the scheme found the Sind Chief Minister absolutely opposed to it. The group never allowed the issue to be thrashed out by the Western leaders by themselves. Through the agency of the Constituent Assembly they were everywhere and saw to it that representatives from smaller units were encouraged to take up an attitude of hostility to the scheme of unification. Why the group should have been opposed to it was beyond understanding. But this attitude helped to generate the worst fears in the West. If the unified East Bengal was to operate on the divided West—so the people began to think—

the plan and objective could only have been to dominate the West. The prospect of domination was rendered a thousand times more intolerable because it could be based on alliance with Hindus who provided that province's majority. The way that the Nazimuddin group time and again called on the Hindu element in the Constituent Assembly was a portent. It will therefore be seen that while the autocratic Governor-General's nominee, the Prime Minister, was helpless and could not get an amendment to the discredited Basic Principles Committee's Report through, the Nazimuddin group was dominating the scene in the Constituent Assembly.

Two moves were initiated to consolidate the group's gains. One was to hurry with the enactment of the Basic Principles Committee's constitutional recommendations with slight variations. The units in the West were reduced to four. The House of Units was given a membership of 50. The combined membership of the two Houses was hinged to the parity formula between East and West. The rub lay in the fact that the real power resided in the Lower House. Since the House of Units did not have equal authority with the Lower House of People, the West did not get the equality and balance which it sought with the East. The one-unit scheme was rejected on the other ground that it would cause delay in constitution-making. This plea was advanced by those who had taken six years to produce the Basic Principles Committee's Report. Actually they did not want to brook any amendment to their original conception of the Constitution. The Report had not only caused a country-wide storm of opposition and disapproval ; it was not even signed by

many of its Western members. But it had to be imposed. The challenge of the United Front to the Muslim League's authority to frame a constitution after it had been so ignominiously defeated at the polls in East Pakistan, made the Nazimuddin group still more intransigent. Pitted against opposition in East and West, its efforts to proceed with constitutin-making only succeeded in creating bittsrsss, suspicion and resistance. ~~Simultaneously~~ the powers of the Governor-General were sought to be clipped. In the first place legislation was brought forth to repeal *Proda*, which gave people the right to bring corrupt ministers and politicians to book. Reports were current that certain politicians were going to be proceeded against under *Proda*. The action to repeal it was therefore obviously inspired by the desire to save them. Then something dramatic happened on the 25th September. The Constituent Assembly revoked sections 9, 10, 10-A. 10-B, and 17 of the Government of India Act. It was under these sections that Ghulam Mohammed had exercised and justified his power to dismiss Nazimuddin. The air of hush-hush and conspiracy in which the action of revenge took place may be judged from the fact that it was taken when the Governor-General was away from the capital. Although it was known that the Constituent Assembly was meeting that day as the Federal Assembly, the schedule was changed at the last minute. Instead of assembling at 10 a.m. as usual, the Constituent Assembly at 9 a.m. as a constitution-making body. And all was over in ten minutes. The Governor-General had been denuded of all his powers. The action was a climax to the opposition against Western unification.

*Public and Representative (Disqualification) Act of 1949.

Everything looked dark, and it must be faith and faith alone which made the present writer say—"There is one issue which ought to be kept open and must remain open ; it is the unification of the Western unit. It is the hinge on which the fate of the country will be decided." (*The Times of Karachi*, 17th September, 1954).

CHAPTER VII

Dissolution of Constituent Assembly

Time and again arose the question of the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly which had come to hang like a millstone round the nation's neck. It did not deliver the constitution for which it was primarily constituted. No doubt its function as the legislature for the administration of the country proved disastrous, because the task of over-lording the people prevented the members from voluntary self-liquidation. The go-slow mood had developed from the very beginning, in the time of Liaquat Ali Khan. From August 1947 to October 1951, all the progress that was made in constitution-making was embodied in the Objectives Resolution. The first Basic Principles Committee Report had proved unpopular and Liaquat Ali Khan desisted from making any further effort. Nazimuddin took a year and a quarter to produce the second Report. It was not merely cold shouldered as the first report was, it really split the nation by its parity proposals in the face of Western divisions. After another eighteen months of Mohammed Ali Bogra's regime the country was no nearer a constitution. Every effort to amend the Report's proposals in terms of American federation was dashed

on the rock of the Nazimuddin group's dogged determination either to have its consitution or nothing at all. Thus in October 1954 there was no better prospect than the discredited Basic Principles Committee's prescription, which threatened to unleash the storm once again, only worse this time because the Nazimuddin group did not even have the pretence of representing East Pakistan which they had two years before. The Assembly and the party which returned them to the Constituent Assembly was no longer in existence. The resistance from that province therefore promised to be equally stiff.

This was the grim situation which faced the ailing and still more constitutionally crippled Governor-General. As has been noted the demand for the dissolution had been raised many time. It became more strident after the elections in East Pakistan. What authority had Nazimuddin and his associates to represent the province, contended the triumphant Fazlul Huq and H.S. Suhrawardy, when the Muslim League had been well-nigh eliminated from the province's legislature ? This feeling was widely shared in the country. But there was that reluctance of sticklers for legality that the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly should not in any way be brought into disrepute. Incredible as it might sound Ghulam Mohammed suffered from the same reluctance. For 18 long months he waited helplessly for some kind of normal way out of the constitutional deadlock. Apart from legal considerations it was felt that dissolution would cause further delay. One did not know how long it would take to bring into being another body. The growing climate of provincialism was also feared. It might produce men whose outlook might be narro-

wer still and who might give a constitutional pattern unsuited to the national interests. This fear was enhanced by the statements and declarations of the United Front leaders. Fazlul Huq was credited with the design of making East Pakistan completely independent. The utterances which were attributed to him while he was in Calcutta immediately after his electoral triumph were not encouraging. Suhrawardy was said to have declared that East Bengal would rule Pakistan from Karachi. In that light the old Muslim League appeared less faithless to the national cause. But the persistent and unrelenting hostility of the Nazimuddin group to any change in their pet constitutional proposals, made the situation really desperate. No means seemed available to checkmate the steam-rolling methods of the group, who, by the undignified manner in which they repealed PRODA and denuded the Governor-General of his powers, made it crystal clear that its brute majority would have its way in complete disregard of what the people at large felt and thought. The desperation of the situation was obvious from the fact that the alternative to the Nazimuddin leadership, namely the United Front of Fazlul Huq and Suhrawardy, was in the doldrums. Because of the former's alleged treasonable utterances, as Chief Minister, under Section 92-A, Governor's rule had been enforced in the province. The latter had left the country for a badly needed cure in Zurich. The confidence of the Nazimuddin group increased by its growing success. On 22nd September 1954, a day after Prime Minister Bogra left for Washington, Fazlul Rehman made a sizzling attack on the proposed Pakistan-U.S. economic pact, which had no purpose other than to show who was who. It was a calculated move,

as the *Times of Karachi* said on September 24 "to repudiate the Government on a point of major policy." Bogra might be the Prime Minister but all effective power had passed into the hands of the group which could not only frame a constitution of its choice, but also replace the Prime Minister if it wished.

However a ray of hope pierced through the gathering darkness. From his sick-bed in a far away Zurich hospital, H.S. Suhrawardy issued a statement advising the Governor-General to dissolve the Constitutent Assembly and reconvene it by elections from amongst the existing provincial legislature which would especially give East Pakistan an opportunity to return its true representatives to the central parliament. He also supported the scheme of Western unification. The statement was obtained by the present writer on his own initiative by flying to Zurich on October 6, 1954. The statement had an electrical effect. It was after all the word of East Pakistan's top leader. It provided a popular justification for the Governor-General to dissolve the Constituent Assembly which he did a fortnight later. But for Suhrawardy's statement, Ghulam Mohammed would not have acted. Once the leader of East Pakistan had spoken—and with Fazlul Huq in disgrace he was the only one to be reckoned with—Ghulam Mohammed could move in the direction the country was thinking, for the West had already lost all confidence in the discredited Constituent Assembly which was forcing the Nazimuddin constitution down its throat.

CHAPTER VIII

The Aftermath

The dissolution of the seven-year-old Constituent Assembly on October 24, 1954, about 18 months after the dismissal of Nazimuddin's ministry, cleared the ground for a *de novo* approach to the yet unfinished task of constitution-making. Mohammed Ali Bogra formed a new government which included General Mohammed Ayub Khan, the then Commander-in-Chief, as the Defence Minister. Bogra lost no time in declaring the Government's firm intention to unify the Western provinces. The provincial legislative assemblies of the Punjab, Frontier and Sind and local agencies of smaller units—like Karachi and Khairpur and the jirga of tribal leaders of Baluchistan passed a resolution declaring in favour of the unification. The Governor-General set up an inter-provincial Council for West Pakistan comprising the Governors and Chief Ministers of the three provinces, the A.G.G. in Baluchistan, the Chief Minister of Khairpur state, the Adviser to Bahawalpur state and Wazir Azam of Kalat. The purpose of this Council was to bring into existence the administrative machinery of the new unified province. Following the normal pattern of provincial administartion the new province was to have a governor, a cabinet, a single chamber legislature and a secretariat. For the tribal areas a resident minister was to be appointed. The Chairman of the West Pakistan Council, Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani, was later in

March 1955 appointed the province's first governor. But no progress could be made towards constitution-making because the fallen speaker of the defunct Constituent Assembly, Tamizuddin Khan, had started court proceedings against the Governor-General. He contended before the Sind Chief Court that the dissolution of the Assembly was unconstitutional and illegal. The Court gave its verdict in favour of the plaintiff but the Central Government appealed to the Federal Court. A long drawn-out hearing took place. While Kenneth Diplock Q.C., represented the Governor-General, I.I. Chundrigar was the senior counsel for Tamizuddin Khan. During the hearing, Chundrigar asked for an opportunity for the Constituent Assembly to dissolve itself. No sooner were three ministers despatched to Lahore on the Chief Justice's hint about Mr. Chundrigar's plea for compromise talks, than his whole attitude changed. Chundrigar would not give assurances that he spoke on behalf of all the members of the Constituent Assembly and that if the requested session was allowed, it would not take up other matters. So the talks fizzled out. The Governor-General however informed the Federal Court of his intention, after the announcement of Judgement, to summon a constituent assembly from among the members of the existing provincial assemblies for the sole purpose of framing a constitution and to provide for the machinery of direct general elections at the earliest date. The new Assembly promised to be successful, partly because it would be drawn from provincial assemblies which had been elected much after those which elected the first Assembly in 1947, and partly the pure task of constitution-making would spare it from the temptation of self-perpetuation like

its forerunner which was charged with the authority of governing the country. The Federal Court upheld the Governor-General's dissolution of the Constituent Assembly on the ground that since it had for eight long years failed to produce a constitution for which purpose it was primarily constituted and had in fact become a perpetual legislature, the prerogative of the Crown, which had been in abeyance, had revived in these special circumstances. It was an extraordinary power to be exercised in an extraordinary situation. The Court also held that the Constituent Assembly had acted unconstitutionally in so far as in its capacity as the constitution-making body, it had not referred its legislation—the practice had started from Liaquat Ali Khan's days—to the Governor-General whose assent was essential according to the Government of India Act 1947. All those laws therefore which had been passed without his concurrence, had to be revalidated retrospectively. Justice Munir further opined in response to references made to the Federal Court by the Governor-General that the new Constituent Assembly should have the same authority and power as the previous one, namely that of constitution-making as well as of giving the country its government.

The elections to the new Constituent Assembly were completed in June of 1955. The representation of the provinces was on the basis of equality between the Eastern and Western wing, each electing 40 members. The new Assembly styled as the National Assembly, had three main parties. The Muslim League, the majority party with 33 seats, all drawn from West Pakistan, elected Choudhri Mohammed Ali, the Finance Minister in the Bogra Ministry, as its leader. The

two other main parties were both from East Pakistan, the United Front with 16 members was led by Fazlul Huq and the Awami League, with 13 members led by H.S. Suhrawardy. Although the assembly met in July 1955 at Murree, its real deliberations started in September with a brush between the Muslim League and the Awami League. Suhrawardy claimed prime ministership which, he said, was promised him by the leaders of the Muslim League, but which had since gone to Choudhri Mohammed Ali.

When Suhrawardy joined the Bogra ministry in December 1954 following the logic of his October statement calling for the dissolution of the old discredited Assembly, he had all along insisted on his right to prime ministership. He was reluctant to join the government because that would place him under Mohammed Ali Bogra, the Prime Minister, for whom he had little regard. When finally he persuaded himself to join the government he treated it more as a Governor-General's council, as in the old British days, rather than Bogra's ministry. He looked forward to becoming the head of the government which would emerge from the new Assembly after the elections. There is no doubt that the leaders of the Muslim League had given him an undertaking that it would be so. It was on that understanding that he, as the Law Minister, had drafted the One Unit Bill for the unification of Western provinces, which he proposed to pilot in the National Assembly as the Prime Minister. From the time, December 1954, that he joined the government he was indefatigable in preaching the idea of Western unity to the Eastern wing. When the elected members of the New Assembly met in May at Murree, all points had been thrashed

out and Suhrawardy's way to premiership seemed smooth. Between the National Assembly's first meeting in July and its re-assembly in September 1955 at Karachi, two things seem to have happened to upset this arrangement. Firstly Ghulam Mohammed, who had originally desired association with Suhrawardy and invited him to join the government had proceeded on leave for reasons of ill-health. Iskander Mirza had taken over as the acting Governor-General. He did not have much love for Suhrawardy and in no small measure persuaded the reluctant Choudhri Mohammed Ali, the newly elected leader of the majority party, the Muslim League, to accept premiership. This situation had also been created by the outgoing Prime Minister, Bogra. From the beginning he had sought to undermine Suhrawardy's position by hob-nobbing with his rival Fazlul Huq of the United Front, the same man whom he had condemned as a traitor a year earlier and had his government replaced by 92-A Governor's regime. He persuaded the United Front to offer itself as a partner in alliance with the Muslim League under the leadership of Choudhri Mohammed Ali. Fazlul Huq did not need much instigation. His dislike of Suhrawardy was patent. Added to it was the ambition of the Muslim League rank and file to whom the party's leadership, being the majority group of a coalition, appeared natural enough. Thus Choudhri Mohammed Ali was under a three-fold pressure—that of the acting Governor-General, the United Front and his own followers. Only Gurmani, the Governor of West Pakistan demurred ; he regarded Suhrawardy as a more reliable ally. So the National Assembly opened on a note of bitter recrimination from Suhrawardy who, in his resentment, went to the whole

length of disowning the entire scheme of Western unification whose Bill he had drafted and which bore his name as the mover. Mohammed Ali Bogra who could not be elected from East Pakistan, had the satisfaction of seeing the cup of premiership slip from Suhrawardy, while he made his way back as Ambassador to Washington whence he had hailed in April 1953, unexpectedly to become the Prime Minister of Pakistan. What footprints he left on the sands of time is indicated by the fact that after over two and a quarter years term of office, the longest tenure of the decade except for Liaquat Ali Khan, he left everyone disillusioned. Governor-General Ghulam Mohammed who brought him on the scene was no happier in his choice than the Nazimuddin group with whom he had colluded. To the people at large he appeared as more of a play-boy than a responsible politician.

CHAPTER IX

Choudhri Mohammed Ali gives a Constitution

Choudhri Mohammed Ali's ascension to prime ministership was generally welcomed in the country. He was long known for his extraordinary intellectual attainments and as an administrator. He played a crucial part in the Partition Council as the only representative of the Muslim League which showed the confidence the Quaid had in him. As Secretary-General of the Pakistan Government, he was the foremost assistant of Liaquat ; in no small way he helped to raise the structure of the country's administration from almost nothing. It was often said that behind Liaquat Ali's throne, Mohammed Ali was the real power. As a Finance Minister, from the time of Nazimuddin to the end of Bogra's Ministry, his influence permeated a much wider field of administration than his department. While he seemed to have little political influence in Nazimuddin's government, after its dismissal, he was practically the man next to Ghulam Mohammed. Not a single political decision could be taken without his say. His say was indeed so big that could he be persuaded to accept a proposal, it was as good as done. Certainly no proposal could pass muster which did not have his blessing, emanate as it might from the highest quarter. Choudhri Mohammed Ali had the unique distinction of becom-

ing Prime Minister after having been elected as the leader of the majority party. Equally rare was his distinction of being the only Prime Minister who resigned on his own, even when he had the majority behind him in the National Assembly. Also he is the only leader who actually produced a constitution. Yet he did not last in office for more than a year. Whether his loss of control over political affairs was due to his lack of experience of politics and guts of leadership, or whether the factors of the raw political situation in the country were too overwhelming, is not easy to determine. Suffice it therefore to relate the story of his one year's stewardship of national affairs of which the present writer was a close observer.

Let it be forthrightly said that Choudhri Mohammed Ali showed an almost inspired determination to get the constitution through. In the first place he did not allow the National Assembly to meet as a day-to-day legislative body, until it had finished its task of constitution-making. In six months, according to a precisely drawn schedule, he had first the One Unit Bill put on the statute book and then on its basis evolved the whole constitution. Choudhri Mohammed Ali never pretended that the constitution was perfect. In the nature of things it could not be. There were so many conflicting viewpoints that compromises were the only solution. Islamic extremism competed with secularism ; separate electorates confronted joint electorates, and the distribution of authority between the Centre and provinces provided room for endless arguments. But ultimately all these conflicts were overcome. The establishment of an equation between the East and the West through the latter's unification earlier, had facilitated the pattern of their mutual relationship and thus a centre was evolved which was strong enough to ensure the

country's smooth development and yet loose enough to provide scope for self-governance to the provinces. The constitution was passed on 29th February, 1956 and enforced on 23rd March, 1956—the day on which the famous Pakistan Resolution was passed at Lahore in 1940.

Choudhri Mohammed Ali's achievement was remarkable for the myriad difficulties that faced his task. To begin with, the attitude of the Awami League whose leader, Suhrawardy, refused to give any co-operation, was discouraging. Being the leader of the Opposition, his views and stand influenced public opinion in the whole country, especially in East Pakistan where he had his stronghold. Not only did he disown the One Unit Bill of his own authorship, but asked for its circulation to elicit public opinion. This demand had the effect of creating confusion because the note he struck was taken up by those in the West who were opposed to unification. Opponents attempted a filibuster which kept the Bill hanging fire for a considerable length of time. Suhrawardy then accused the government that it had no intention of proceeding with constitution-making after the One Unit Bill had been enacted. Mohammed Ali was thus constantly under pressure to assure the House that he was determined to complete the task of constitution-making. When the 16-man Coalition Committee had after all produced the Draft Constitution, Suhrawardy made the demand for the dissolution of the National Assembly and its direct re-election, that is of course after having taken a lion's share in the creation of the existing assembly from among the provincial assemblies. When the constitution was ready, his party refused to sign the document. Perhaps it is a measure of the political leader's tortuous contortions of contradictory postures that barely a year later

Suhrawardy had no hesitation in accepting the office of Prime Ministership under that very constitution and still later to express his determination "to preserve and defend it."

Choudhri Mohammed Ali had also to contend with another movement. Fazlur Rehman, who was the sole remanant of the Nazimuddin group in the National Assembly and Altaf Husain of *Dawn*, all of a sudden became seized with the "grand conception" of an unitary pattern of constitution. They cried from the house-tops that federalism which was shaping the constituion was fatal for the country and must be given up. The move was started at a time when the Coalition Party was giving the finishing touches to their Draft Constitution. What could be the purpose of that move ? For over three years, since the assumption of prime ministership by Nazimuddin in October 1951 to the day of dissolution of the old Constitutent Assembly, in October 1954, the group had been in complete charge of constitution-making. While in government they produced the Basic Principles Committee's Report which was avowedly based on the concept of federalism even if its expression was defective. Later they resisted all attempts of Mohammed Ali Bogra to amend that pattern in the least and insisted on its passage ; their adhesion to federalism was unchanged. But more than two years later they raised the slogan of 'unitary government' which was couched in ideological terms. That could only be inspired by a calculation to thwart the unification of the West. Otherwise it is difficult to see how those who prescribed an eleven-part division of the country, 10 in the West, could have the psychological matrix to conceive things in unitary terms. That this new slogan found support and echoes from such

rabid provincialists as Ghulam Ali Talpur who swore by Sind and Jaffar Shah, who swore by the Frontier, illustrates the purpose of the move.

Actually the present writer had been the most fervent advocate of a unitary system. For years *Evening Times* and *The Times of Karachi* contended that Pakistan could not but have a unitary system because the country was not brought into being by a combination of pre-existing independent states which wanted to create a federal centre by delegating it some power, but by struggle of the Muslim nation which acted indivisibly. It was in recognition of that fact that the three provinces, the Punjab, Bengal and Assam had to be partitioned to harmonise with the frontiers of the Muslim nationhood. And so the constitution must be unitary. This long agitation proved ineffective because geography divided the country into two parts and because East Pakistan demanded provincial autonomy. And so it had to be given up. All this time Nazimuddin and his associates worked for a federation and none of them so much as whispered "unitary system". For it is quite possible if this group, which was in power, had hearkened to the theory and philosophy of "unitary system" a climate might have been created for the acceptance of that pattern. This belated cry for a unitary constitution did not however succeed in preventing the passage of the constitution.

Choudhri Mohammed Ali was encountering difficulties from another quarter, which ultimately proved insuperable. Among the many unique things that Mohammed Ali did was his decision not to become president of the Muslim League after his election to the leadership of the parliamentary party.

Instead he asked Sardar Abdur Rub Nishtar to take up the responsibilities of the organisation's presidentship. No sooner however had this happened than the contradiction which inhered in the situation began to come to the surface. President Nishtar began to act independently of the League Prime Minister. Indeed he conceived his position as that of a controller of the government. He issued various edicts which showed that he was not only determined to run the organisation in the image of his thinking but the colleagues he collected in his working committee included members of the Nazimuddin group. Thus Choudhri Mohammed Ali was brought face to face with the implacable hostility of those who were against all advocates of Western unification.

Worse still the whole concept of parliamentary authority was in danger of being discredited. If the leader of the parliamentary party was merely the agent of the Chief outside the parliament, then the authority of governance of the country was *ipso facto* shifted outside the parliament. That Choudhri Mohammed Ali accepted a seat of membership of the Working Committee of which Nishtar was the president physically brought the premiership into an equation of belittlement. Thus a caucus which had neither an electoral nor a popular position came to appear as more powerful than the National Assembly. It was especially unpalatable to the United Front, the partners in the coalition government, who were the elected representatives of East Pakistan but were through Choudhri Mohammed Ali reduced to a position of subordination to an unrepresentative extra-parliamentary body.

Choudhri Mohammed Ali's decision not to assume the

League's presidentship was no doubt dictated by the purest motives. The organisation needed whole time work ; after all in Britain the Chairman of the Conservative and Labour parties were subordinate to the parliamentary leaders. But in the atmosphere of Pakistan, the British precedent just did not work. Nishtar and his Working Committee became the hot-bed of intrigues and finally the instrument of Choudhri Mohammed Ali's downfall. His sorrows bring into bold relief the practical sagacity of Liaquat Ali which impelled him to wear the dual crown of presidentship and premiership whose example Nazimuddin faithfully followed. The presidentship of the Muslim League might not have enabled them to do much to make the organisation popular and effective, but it did keep it out of mischief so far as they were concerned.

CHAPTER X

Muslim League Prime Minister clashes with Muslim League President

The manful grip which Choudhri Mohammed Ali maintained over the process of constitution-making seemed visibly to relax the moment the set objective had been achieved on 23rd March, 1956. The next five months were indeed a period of steady decline of the Prime Minister's influence. Mohammed Ali was never the man for the hurly-burly of politics. But politics in Pakistan was far worse than merely hurly-burly ; it was bloody, merciless and completely individualistic. Not one active politician could be said to have been burdened with any consideration of a far-sighted policy or deep-seated conviction ; they were not even possessed of the herd instinct of getting together and going together even in self-defence. Pakistani politicians had no collective purpose and no total objective. Power was the sole aim, no means were too mean to achieve it. Mohammed Ali was an exception. In the first place he was no politician, but when he became one, what happened to the exception ? His downfall is a crucial point for the understanding of Pakistani politics, for after him the

gates of the deluge were wide open.

Mohammed Ali's trouble was self-started. His choice of Abdur Rab Nishtar as President of Muslim League might have been inspired by the noblest of aims, but that was his fatal mistake. Saddled by the Prime Minister, as by Liaquat Ail Khan and Nazimuddin, the League was a tame and lifeless animal. But harnessed by rivals for power—in a kinds of politics where individual motivations were supreme to the complete exclusion of even partisan loyalty let alone attachment to some set of principles—the League had the most dangerous potentials for mischief-making, to which it developed under Mohammed Ali's opponents who had all gathered under the wings of its Working Committee. As has been noted earlier, Abdur Rab Nishtar took a very lofty view of his presidentship and lost no time in making himself felt by issuing circulars of one kind or another to all and sundry. He treated the parliamentary party as one of the organisation's minor branches. But the vital point of divergence between the parliamentary leader, Mohammed Ali, the League's President, Nishtar, was reached on the formation of the Muslim League parliamentary party in the interim legislature of the newly formed province of West Pakistan. That was indeed the beginning of the end of the regime of Mohammed Ali.

One of the important considerations in the unification of the western provinces was accommodation of the smaller provinces of Sind and the Frontier ; they were to have no cause of grievance. Three concessions were contemplated

for them. Firstly, the Punjab would have 40 per cent representation in the Assembly instead of 56 per cent in proportion to its population. Secondly, for the first ten years no Punjabi will become Chief Minister of the province. Thirdly, some town in the north-west frontier, Peshawar or Abbottabad, will be chosen as the provincial centre. The first point was of course incorporated in the constitution. The election to the interim assembly was held on that basis from amongst the members of the defunct provincial assemblies. The second consideration was met by the appointment of Dr. Khan Sahib, the well-known Pathan leader, as the Chief Minister. Dr. Khan Sahib might have been an opponent of Pakistan in the pre-partition days, but he was an enthusiastic supporter of Western unification. This appointment was made in consultation with and approval of League leaders like Mumtaz Daultana and Khuhro, both of whom joined his Cabinet. The third point could not be met immediately and Lahore was chosen as the interim provincial seat. This caused resentment and the Frontier's representatives, Abdur Rashid and Jaffar Shah on that account abstained from voting on the One Unit Bill.

The trouble started when in the first week of April 1956 the Muslim League party in the Provincial Assembly came to elect a leader. In the first place, in spite of being urged, the Muslim League high command refused to fight the elections on party lines and issued no tickets. But when the elections were over they claimed to have captured 245 out of the 310 seats in the Provincial Assembly. Then began an agitation that a Muslim Leaguer should head the Government. Khan Sahib was not only a non-Leaguer, he had declined to become

even an associate of the Muslim League. In order to maintain the *status quo* and keep word to smaller provinces, Prime Minister Mohammed Ali on the specific assurance and request of Mumtaz Daultana, the most influential member of the Muslim League in the new Assembly, issued a statement in favour of retaining Khan Sahib as the Chief Minister. That at once became the *casus belli*, for Nishtar supported by disgruntled elements in the League, insisted on the Muslim League leader being called upon to form the Ministry. While Prime Minister Mohammed Ali stayed back in Karachi, President Nishtar dashed to Lahore to chair the meeting of the League Assembly party. At the meeting not only was the leader, Sardar Bahadur Khan, elected, but also a resolution passed to the effect that the League and League alone should be asked to form the Ministry. Although that resolution was said to be addressed to Governor Gurmani and Chief Minister Khan Sahib, for the one to quit the office and the other to fill it with the League nominee, actually it was a challenge to the Prime Minister who had issued a public statement in favour of Khan Sahib. Daultana, who had caused that statement to be issued, swore that he opposed the resolution but was hopelessly over-ruled. This just could not be. Daultana's influence with that body was too great to be overlooked. The Lahore meeting of the League provincial parliamentary party, to all intents and purposes, had the appearance of defiance of Prime Minister Mohammed Ali's authority and amounted to a vote of no-confidence in him. Sardar Nishtar, the President of the Muslim League had trounced Mohammed Ali, the League leader in the Parliament.

Although Nishtar won against Mohammed Ali and

succeeded in lowering the prestige of the League Prime Minister at home and abroad, he did not achieve the aim of installing the League leader as the Chief Minister of West Pakistan. Quite the contrary. So long as the League claimed that it had the 245 members, it looked formidable. Had it contented itself with merely electing the leader, its claim to majority would have been sustainable. But when, under instigation from Nishtar, it went further and pressed the resolution that the League leader should be called upon to form the Ministry, it mustered only 131 votes out of the 204 who attended the meeting. Clearly those who did not vote for the resolution favoured the continuance of Khan Sahib as the Chief Minister. These 73 votes plus those who did not attend the meeting at all created the presumption that the majority in the House of 310 was against the Muslim League. It was on that presumption that the Governor refused to accede to the League demand. And when the Assembly met he was proved right, for those who voted for Khan Sahib turned out to be in a majority, *albeit* a precarious one. But when the trial of strength clinched in favour of Khan Sahib, there was of course a landslide of opportunists to his side. There were instances of such a hurried rush to Khan Sahib's band-wagon that ministers were being sworn in by the horde and by the hour. This greatly thinned the Muslim League ranks. Nishtar's strategy brought the League Prime Minister into ridicule in the Assembly but perhaps there is no prize more worth having than satisfaction of one's spleen. After all Mohammed Ali came to know who was the power.

But this was merely the beginning. The League Working Committee met in Karachi on April 23rd and called for the

recall of Governor Gurmani for not having appointed the League leader as the Chief Minister. Who could order the recall of the Governor but the Prime Minister, Mohammed Ali? Thus the Prime Minister was given an order from a body outside the parliament. But since the Prime Minister was a member of the Working Committee nominated by the Muslim League President and therefore not amenable to his influence, the Government did appear under duress. And since the Government was a coalition, the command had the effect of involving a non-League party, namely the United Front. The effect of the activities of Nishtar and his Working Committee were to denude the parliament of its authority. Perhaps that was the aim, since most of the member of the Working Committee like Nurul Amin, Nazimuddin and Tamizuddin Khan were not members of the National Assembly. No wonder Mohammed Ali had soon to quit the Working Committee, but not soon enough to save the Governmental standing with the people.

It is easy to sympathise with Mohammed Ali. He was an innocent among politicians. But his innocence does not hide his failure. Why should he have given the organisation over to an outsider when he knew full well that it could become a platform for his erstwhile opponents with whom he had crossed swords for years on fundamental issues? Was there no Muslim League organisation,—there was none in the time of Nazimuddin who did not nominate his Working Committee until after dismissal from prime-ministership—his authority as the leader of the parliament would have appeared high, clear and unrivalled and with that of the parliament itself. But once the Muslim League was handed over to others,

they did their worst to raise a dust of controversy about his position and in that process seriously brought the very institution of parliament into disrepute. Again, why did he make an advance public statement in favour of Khan Sahib? He was not a Leaguer; he was a man who did not care to be even an associate member of the Muslim League. There were non-Muslims who had become associate members of the Muslim League in political alliance. Gibbon of the Punjab is an example. Surely it did not appear loyal in the eyes of Leaguers, especially when so much doubt could be raised about Khan Sahib's patriotism, who had continuously opposed Pakistan and was for years in prison as a suspect. Why could not the matter be left entirely to the League Assembly party when it was already clear that there would be a challenge to Khan Sahib? It was indeed highly impolitic for the League leader to appear as supporting a non-party man. There could be no worse sin than that in partisan considerations. Plausibly, it was said how could such a man lead the party to success and strength. Again, when controversy arose about his statement, was it not urgent for him to attend the party meeting in Lahore himself? He could have made clear to the members that it was an agreed policy to maintain a non-Punjabi as Chief Minister, and that his statement was given at the request of Daultana and other top League leaders. If not as a Leaguer, then as a Prime Minister and a man who was widely respected, he could have easily turned the tables against Nishtar's manoeuvres and secured his own position and that of the Government. He did not do anything of the kind. He just did not intervene. He allowed his case to go by default. It was passivity on one side and activity on the other.

One cannot be a politician without assertion. Or is it that he had exhausted all his power of assertion and persuasion in the course of constitution-making. That could be, for he was at the end of it a sick man. All of a sudden he had lost his energy and zeal and it appeared later, his will-power.

Once the mischief of dissension was afoot, it had to run its full circle. After the session of the West Pakistan Assembly which confirmed Khan Sahib's position, his following hardened into a party—the Republican Party. Governor Gurmani played a decisive part in its crystallisation. But no party could stay in power in the province without support at the centre. Synchronising the split in the province, one by one, the Muslim League members began to call themselves Republican. These members left without permission from the leader, Choudhri Mohammed Ali, though assuring him of their support whatever partisan garb they might wear. Thanks to the benign patronage of the President, Iskander Mirza, soon the new party in the central parliament swelled to the majority of 21 against the Muslim League's remnant of 15. Thus Mohammed Ali was put between two stools. The Lahore meeting of the League provincial parliamentary party, under the auspices of the League President, Sardar Nishtar, had shown that the Prime Minister's writ did not run in the League organisation. The 15 Leaguers in the National Assembly of which he was supposed to be leader, did not actually belong to him; they were in the control of either the provincial leaders or through them of the Muslim League President. Similarly those dissident members who had formed themselves into the Republican party without so much as a reference to him as their leader, were brought into that

fold by President Iskander Mirza and were consequently under his authority. Mohammed Ali's position was bared of all substance. Yet his importance lay in the fact that not only the Leaguers and Republicans swore loyalty to him, but also the coalition party, the United Front stuck to him. Indeed the Leaguers and Republicans, for their contrary purposes, were fervently wooing Mohammed Ali. While he was asked to choose sides, his authority could have proved decisive one way or other. He inclined to the Muslim League because it was as a Leaguer that he was called to form his government. But he also felt betrayed by it, as indeed he was and this rankled with him. But he did not choose to side with the Republicans either. And he was unable to resolve this dilemma. One cannot blame Mohammed Ali for not making up his mind between the League and the Republicans. Indeed he took an honourable course of resigning from Prime Ministership even when the coalition party passed a vote of confidence in him with a strength of 44 votes, a clear majority, in the National Assembly. Yet it cannot be denied that he showed lack of fight at a crucial hour in the history of Pakistan's political development. Had he accepted the Coalition Party's urgings to continue, even as a non-party man, he could have saved the country from much of the chaos that followed his quittal. Mohammed Ali was not only respected throughout the country because he was a commoner, a good man, long associated with the Pakistan movement, the author of the constitutions, a man of honesty, ability and integrity but also he was the only person who could stand up to General Iskander Mirza. After him, the field was left wide and fertile

for Mirza's interminable intrigues. On Mohammed Ali's departure the country knew no rest, no moment of peace; there were constant ministry-makings, four inside two years, and President Mirza was in his element giving the poor country whirl after whirl till its polity was shaken to smithereens. History will take full account of Choudhri Mohammed Ali's honesty of purpose in all that he did, but it may return a less merciful verdict on his handing over the country to the reckless ambitions of Iskander Mirza.

CHAPTER XI

Iskander Mirza exploits the Deluge

Mohammed Ali's resignation did not worry the League High Command. The Muslim League may have lost its Prime Minister but they had their revenge. In Karachi League circles it provided positive delight. Not long before some of them had broken up an Independent Day meeting addressed by the Prime Minister and chased him to his house with the demand that a certain police officer, Grace by name, should be expelled from the country. The crime in which the English police officer was supposed to be implicated was the death of a man named Memon, whilst under some kind of investigation at the police station. The incident took place when Mohammed Ali was in London for the Commonwealth Conference and Law Minister Chundrigar, was acting as the Prime Minister; he took a personal interest in the case and had caused to be set afoot a thorough investigation into the incident. There was loose talk that some Punjabi police officers were involved. That was enough in that climate of intense provincialism to make Memon into a martyr. Huge public meetings were held demanding the heads of the police officers whose names were darkly hinted. Memon was called

a *Shaheed* and was mentioned in the same breath as Liaquat Ali Khan. Many police officers were suspended and transferred, but that did not satisfy the justice-seekers. When therefore on return, Mohammed Ali was addressing the annual independence day meeting and surveying national and international affairs, he was confronted with only one question—Memon and Grace. While investigation into the circumstances of Memon's death on the orders by Chundrigar were already going on and Grace had been given long leave preparatory to retirement, the same demand was repeated and shrieked at the Prime Minister. That event was the last straw on the already breaking back of Mohammed Ali. It demonstrated, if a demonstration was needed, how every stick came handy to beat one's opponents who were largely inspired by personal pique. Karachi came to enjoy the dubious authority of deciding national issues without reference to the bulk of people in the East or the West, by the simple device of mob demonstration. Not unoften legislation in the Parliament was thwarted by the pressure of demonstrators at the Assembly building. There was such a League-engineered demonstration against the passage of the joint electorate bill. Thus Karachi exercised a veto on the will and opinion of the people of East and West alike.

Mohammed Ali had hardly time to pack up his things before the new Prime Minister was on the threshold. Suhrawardy had cultivated President Iskander Mirza, who had put the Republican party at his disposal. The very first care that he took was to see that Mohammed Ali was despatched abroad. Suhrawardy offered him an ambassadorial post in Washington. The trick failed however because of its premature publicity.

Actually the news was published by *The Times of Karachi* which annoyed Suhrawardy very much because it made up Mohammed Ali's mind who had already reservations about the offer. Although Suhrawardy considered himself very shrewd, his equation with General Mirza was not strong. Suhrawardy was the leader of a minority party, only 13, while the President had as many as 21 votes in his pocket and these votes were constantly increasing through the sheer magnetism of patronage. Suhrawardy's inordinate ambition for the office was itself his achille's heel. He had baulked at signing the Constitution but he had no hesitation in becoming Prime Minister under that very Constitution.

Now a few words about the central figure of this period, General Iskander Mirza. It must be said to his credit that he knew his mind clearly when others were confused. He was working according to a plan. First of all he had Ghulam Mohammed removed from the helm of affairs in July 1955 on the specious ground of his ill-health, no doubt with the approval of Choudhri Mohammed Ali. Well saddled in his office, he had two aims, to discredit the Constitution which had at long last been produced and made him President and to discredit all politicians. The latter aim was the more easily achieved. Using the Republican party as his main instrument, he could create a political crisis at will. The Republicans joined the Awami League and withdrew. They joined the Muslim League and withdrew after two months. After having proved the inadequacy of every party, the Republicans came to rule unhampered. Thus politically Iskander Mirza became the all-important centre of initiative and gravity. If anyone wanted prime ministership he had to woo him.

He could bestow ministership on whom he liked. And of course, there were many other gifts in his giving. This position of vantage encourged him to manoeuvre changes in the Constitution which would suit his purpose. Right from the beginning he found fault with the Constitution. He made no bones about his dislike of the Islamic element in it and especially the parliamentary system. He advocated the presidential system with himself as the President. First he stated his opinions privately. But later on he began to speak openly. By March 1957, he found courage enough to urge Constitutional changes on the occasion of the Republic Day. *The Times of Karachi* took strong exception to his utterances and wrote an editorial urging his impeachment on the ground that the President had no business to criticise the Constitution which he had sworn "to preserve and defend" or seek to change it. Amendments of the Constitution were of course provided for but that was the exclusive privilege of the law-makers in the Parliament. It was also generally agreed that the people should have their say on the Constitution at the general elections, before which no amendment to it should be made.

The President's irresponsible and frivolous talk could not possibly enhance the worth and value of the Constitution and ensure its smooth working. Indeed it created a climate for the intrigues and manoeuvring of those who did not like it, especially the provincial leaders whose fortunes were ill-affected by the unification of the West. Iskander Mirza's avowal of disapproval of the Constitution in no small measure encouraged politicians in the West Pakistan Assebmly to start a movement to undo the Western Unit. A National Awami Party was formed with the clear objective of destroying ~~unifica-~~ the unit

tion and between the struggle for power of the Muslim League and the Republicans, this group of 10 reached the commanding height of an arbiter of Goverment's fortunes. Both the big parties entered into pacts with the National Awami Party promising the undoing of the Unit only if it supported them, in the case of one to achieve power and the other to maintain it in power.

Iskander Mirza was anxious that the desired changes in the Constitution should take place in the life-time of the existing National Assembly which he could control through the instrument of the Republican party and those who wanted to buy its support. Towards that end, he was striving to remove the prospects of general elections which had been promised to be held immediately after the completion of the Constitution, into as uncertain and distant a future as he could possibly push them to. That aim he was seeking to achieve through the independent Election Commission charged with the task of conducting elections, which the Constitution had put under the direct control of the President. Another opening through which he sought to increase his power was the innocuous provision in the Constitution which gave him authority to bring into harmony the provisions of the out-date Government of India Act 1947 and those of the new Constitution during the interim period. He made use of provision 234 to nominate three West Pakistan representatives to the National Economic Council for the ostensible reason that the Assembly was in suspension. This deprived the province of an important constitutional right. The provincial right in that respect was considered so sacrosanct by the constitution-makers that it was one of the 10 provisions which the Parliament could not amend

without the specific request of the provincial legislature which should have previously voted for it. If he could militate against such a provision which was the sheet anchor of provincial autonomy, no limit could be put on his arbitary power of encroachments on the Constitution. At the same time his henchmen began to demand the appointment of a Revolutionary Council. The streets of Karachi were plastered with huge posters making that demand. No action was taken to put down these posters nor were the people who put them up tracked down. Still another way in which he tried to nullify the Constitution was the non-implementation of that part of the Constitution which gave power to the provinces. That led to great agitation in East Pakistan where the demand for provincial autonomy had been especially pressing. Frustration gave rise to extremism. Unfortunately Suhrawardy became a party to Mirza's manoeuvre in this respect. Since he played no part in constitution-making he was not particularly enthusiastic in seeking its implementation. It was good only so far as it secured him the job. It also reflected on his opportunism. He had won elections in East Pakistan on the promise of provincial autonomy. But above all he liked to exercise power and if he was at the Centre, he wanted the power to be located there rather than in Dacca or Lahore. While it speaks little of Suhrawardy's political philosophy, his attitude did help to bring the Constitution into disrepute and worsen provincial feelings.

Iskander Mirza soon retracted from open propaganda against the Constitution in the face of the barrage of criticism in the Press, but he took all steps to see that it was not enforced. And so all the political parties were constantly

kept on tenterhooks by playing the game of musical chairs. Ministries changed from time to time and political crises were staged with monotonous regularity. This chronic situation of instability, he calculated, would itself bring his goal of all-power nearer and within reach. His juggling with political parties and his utter indifference to anything stable and enduring in political thinking did create an intolerable strain. Almost a civil war ensued in West Pakistan where the Assembly instead of working in terms of the province's given constitutional unity for its well-being, was primarily concerned in breaking that structure. The anarchic scene in the Eastern wing reached its nadir in the murder of the Deputy Speaker in a scuffle between rival parties on the floor of the Assembly.

From the time of the departure of Mohammed Ali in August 1956, to the day of Revolut'on of October 1958, is therefore the era of Iskander Mirza. Suhrawardy was merely ~~one of the~~ chapters of its history.

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CHAPTER XII

From Suhrawardy to Firoz Khan Noon

Although Suhrawardy's dream to be the Prime Minister of Pakistan came true after a long period of waiting, it did not bring him the real power which goes with the office. As the leader of a minority party (the Awami League's strength in the National Assembly was only 13), he was entirely dependent on the Republican party which brought him face to face with the President, Iskander Mirza, in an unequal equation. From the beginning therefore he suffered an inferiority complex which he wanted to overcome. He tried to do this in many ways. Firstly he behaved in public as if he were the real master of the situation. So far as he did have a standing in the public, he scored over General Mirza by the simple device of addressing public meetings and showing himself to the people as much as he could. Also he made use of his power of patronage to his partymen who flocked to him from the four corners of the country. The more they came and the more they got, the more they propagated about the greatness of the Prime Minister. On the publicity front he did succeed in creating an image of his strength. Also he conceived and evinced a great contempt for the Republican leaders whom

he described as men of straw. It also stood to logic. If the majority party's leaders agreed to serve under a leader of a minority party, there must be something inherently weak in the Republicans. One way he chose to demonstrate his authority was by giving his partymen the most important and lucrative portfolios. While the Republicans got foreign ministership, Firoz Khan Noon, and Finance Ministership, Amjed Ali, the Awami League not only had the Prime Minister on their side, who ultimately controlled foreign affairs, it also bagged commerce, industry, labour and education. All those departments had a potentiality for cultivating public support, which came in useful on the eve of a general election scheduled for the March of 1958. Over and above this the Prime Minister was his own defence minister. Although he did concede in theory that his party was in minority, he felt that he was a popular leader and a capable man at that. Indeed he behaved as if he had already won the general elections in which of course according to his predictions, the contemptible, rootless Republicans would be eliminated. Thus he saw his major partners in the Coalition Government as being useful only in so far as they provided their convenient solid back for him to stand on. As partners in the coming elections, he had no use for them. For that eventuality he either depended on the inherent strength of his own party, and if an ally was needed he looked to the Muslim League with whose leaders, especially Mumtaz Daultana, he had quite early started a clandestine romance. The greater that romance flourished the more openly he became abusive and critical of the Republicans. It was a strange situation. For his part, Iskander Mirza gave him as much rope as he needed to hang himself. He reckoned with Suhrawardy's political standing in the

country. He was the only nut he had not yet cracked. And he reckoned that if he could also trounce Suhrawardy there would be none in the country to frustrate the fulfilment of his ambition which, as Choudhri Mohammed Ali has hinted—and he should know—was to establish a monarchical order which would set an example in "controlled democracy". He caused stories to be circulated of the extreme corruption of the Awami League Ministers who were said to be under direction from the Prime Minister, to collect a given large sum of funds for purposes of general elections. These stories found easy credence for various reasons, not the least because businessmen who benefited in the shape of import licences for their contributions soon indulged in boastful talk about them. There is no better way of spreading a rumour than its ventilation in the heart of an exchange market. Speculators are the best disseminators of news.

Suhrawardy's foreign tours did not help his reputation either. The habit of expressing himself on all occasions with a view to getting an appreciative response where he happened to be, led him to say things which a responsible public man would not confide to anyone but his closest associates. For instance, while in London, he offered to mediate between the Arabs and Israel. Pakistan does not even recognise the Jewish state whose name always appears in quotation marks. He issued an entirely unwarranted statement supporting the British on Oman. He showed himself unnecessarily opposed to President Nasser in his desperate struggle against the British. He ridiculed the plea for the unity of Muslim countries on the ground that zero plus zero plus zero amounted to a zero. All these things hurt Muslim susceptibilities in the country

and isolated it from the Muslim world. But perhaps the low mark of his regime's unwisdom was reached when he failed to cash in on the international situation following the seizure of Suez. India's attitude had created deep resentment in the West. When on January 16th, 1957 Pakistan drew the attention of the Security Council to the announcement of the so-called Constituent Assembly of "Jammu and Kashmir" to integrate the state with India, the Council passed a categorical resolution on January 24th saying that nothing that happened in the state could constitute its disposition in accordance with the declared principle, namely, free plebiscite after demilitarisation. On February 20th, U.K., U.S.A., Cuba among others went a step further and presented a resolution in which for the first time, was envisaged the stationing of a U.N. force in the state with a view to facilitating demilitarisation after which a plebiscite might be held. This resolution was vetoed by Russia. The country then demanded of Suhrawardy not to accept any watered-down resolution, but to take the original one to the General Assembly. Since the U.S.A., and Britain were committed to it there was every possibility of its passage. For the first time the issue could have thus been clinched. Suhrawardy did nothing of the kind, with the result that an ineffective resolution was passed commissioning yet another U.N. representative to reassess the Kashmir situation with India and Pakistan. Russia did not veto it, for obviously it was innocuous. It gave India a breathing space, which is what it wanted to make up with the West. Suhrawardy missed a fine opportunity to ride the tide which was running in our favour. Since then we have never induced that decisive frame of mind in our Western allies. What remained for us was to

blame all and sundry and to repent at leisure which the then Foreign Minister Firoz Khan Noon did to his heart's content on his return from his infructuous mission to the Security Council.

In the kaleidoscopic politics of Pakistan, Suhrawardy had struck up a friendship with Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani, the Governor of West Pakistan. For a long time Gurmani had played an effective part in central politics where he was the Interior Minister until the second Bogra government in 1954. This government included Iskander Mirza who did not seem to see eye to eye with Gurmani. So he was shifted to Lahore as the governor of the newly-formed province of West Pakistan. There is little doubt that he did a lot for the implementation of Western unification, whose conception he helped to clarify both on the theoretic and administrative levels. While he got on very well with ideas, he did not equally well get on with fellow-politicians, for governor or no he was *par excellence* a political animal. He was right in joining hands with the Muslim League provincial chief, Mumtaz Daultana, to oust Chief Minister Firoz Khan Noon who had not warmed up to the idea of Western integration on a unitary pattern ; he was playing with the scheme of zonal federation with four constituent provinces. But he parted company with Daultana when the choice fell between a League nominee for chief ministership and Khan Sahib. It is of course the League leadership which in its hasty and shortsighted policy proved Gurmani's presumption right that the majority was on the side of Khan Sahib. In due course he also fell foul of Khan Sahib. So started a new circle of alliances and naturally he turned against the Republican party. Since Iskander Mirza

was the patron/chief of the Republicans that also confronted Gurmani with him. The situation lent itself to an understanding between Gurmani and Suhrawardy, the former already on the wrong side of Iskander Mirza and the latter doing everything to run loose from his control. There were reports that if politics took a certain turn it would see Gurmani elevated to presidentship while Suhrawardy occupied a securer seat of prime ministerhsip. Unfortunately for them politics did not take that particular turn. On the contrary, Gurmani was dismissed from governorship and the painful task of doing it was performed by no other than friend Suhrawardy himself. It so happened that the Republicans in the province got nervous of Gurmani's activities. They feared that if he were allowed to stay on there they might lose their majority in the Assembly. It was therefore essential for their safety that the Governor should go. He was made to go. And that could be easily done by the simple trick of threatening to withdraw support from Suhrawardy's government. Suhrawardy surrendered. So in the event of an actual trial of strength the redoubtable Awami League leader did not come off well. Gurmani was reported to have said that Suhrawardy would not survive his dismissal for long and his prediction came true. Within less than two months of Gurmani's exit on 29th August, 1957, the Republicans withdrew their support from Suhrawardy on 14th October and the President dismissed the government without so much as asking for the Prime Minister's resignation. Suhrawardy protested but to no avail because arithmetically the President was on indisputable ground. Suhrawardy claimed majority in the National Assembly, which he demanded should be called to test his assertion. It was not called, but Suhrawardy's claim to majority could

have been based on some tacit understanding with the Muslim League. That was precisely the reason for the Republicans' withdrawal of support. Suhrawardy did achieve his ambition to become the Prime Minister but he did not measure to his own ambition nor the expectation of others.

Incredible as it might sound, now the Republicans came to an understanding with their implacable opponents, the Muslim League. It is difficult to apportion discredit between the League and the Republicans. It was these factions which were responsible for the frustration of Choudhri Mohammed Ali's government and were since in deadly combat both on the central and provincial level. But the marriage did not last long. Either the interests or temperament of the two groups were mutually exclusive. But the issue on which they parted company is interesting. The Muslim League had made much of separate electorate for Muslims and non-Muslims. It was essential, they said, to the maintenance of the two-nation theory which brought about Pakistan. It was little realised that the two-nation theory obtained in the old United India whose urge had since been satisfied through the partition of the country. And after that a united and indivisible country—everyone swore by the unity of the country—could be sustained only on the basis of a single nationhood. Concession to the existence of two nations was fraught with the possibility of division of the country. The leaders understood the logic of the contention but only in private. Publicly they preached separate electorates. Perhaps the practical reason which made them take this stand consisted in the hope that thus and thus alone would they be able to press Islam into service at the elections. The concept of united nationhood *ipso facto* obliged

them to talk in other general, social and economic terms. Now the National Assembly had recommended joint electorate at its Dacca session on the initiative of Suhrawardy's government. The Muslim League wanted repudiation of that recommendation and the incorporation of separate electorates. They entered the coalition with the Republicans on the condition that the latter would help in securing the repeal of joint electorate. But later the Republicans went back on that undertaking. They contended that their organising committee (which was yet in the process of being organised) had not given its approval to the agreement to vote for separate electorates. Actually once parting was decided upon, it mattered little what reason was given. After all divorces have taken place on flimsier grounds. The true reason seemed to be that Iskander Mirza feared that coalition with the Muslim League might result in the fusion and merger of the two parties, as indeed the Muslim League expected and proclaimed. It was plausible too. Even after two years of existence the Republicans had not struck roots into the soil, while the Muslim League at least possessed the magic of a name and a past. The prospect of the Republicans' disappearance could not much excite him.

Having been through a repeated and long apprenticeship as junior partners and having rubbed shoulders with leaders of the standing of Suhrawardy, Daultana, Chundrigar and Mohammed Ali, at long last the Republicans decided to make bold to ascend to the summit. Firoz Khan Noon, the leader, was called upon to form the government. Of course he could not do so all on his own. He had to have a party to coalesce with. And with whom did the coalition take place?

None other than Suhrawardy's Awami League from whom stormy separation had occurred barely two months before. It was expected that by then Suhrawardy must have learnt his lesson. But he had a card up his sleeve. It was a point of honour with him, so his followers said, not to enter the government under anyone else's Prime Ministership. Therefore while he would give the Republican government his party's support in the National Assembly, no Awami Leaguer could join the government. This macabre attitude to politics caused a good deal of perturbation of mind among the Republicans, for the government could not be without representatives from East Pakistan. It would looklike a one sided affair. Suhrawardy no doubt reckoned that by remaining out he was obliging the Republican Prime Minister to be at his back and call in all circumstances when the latter required support of his party in the Assembly. He would give it as and when occasion arose and since there would be no assurance of his constant alliance, he would thus appear super-Prime Minister, the thought did a lot of good to his vanity. The Republican leader, for his part, in desperation began to recruit as many East Pakistanis as he could get in the ministerial ranks from the other East Pakistan party, Fazlul Huq's Krishak Sarmik Praja, to save his government's face. Sure enough there were quite enough willing hands to help the Prime Minister out of his difficulty. The result was that while Suhrawardy did not get much satisfaction from his fancied superior position—his followers certainly did not—the ministerial jobs soon got filled up with the rival party members. So Suhrawardy had to come down from his high horse. If he could not get jobs for the boys, what chance

was there for the party to succeed at the polls. Then Suhrawardy began to pester Prime Minister Noon for ministerial posts. The team reached the unprecedented number of 25 members, senior and junior ministers in a House of 80. But being sworn in as minister was not enough. The choice of portfolios was important. Now started the struggle for key portfolios. For some days one did not know to whom to turn for this department or that. Everything was in a melting pot. Ultimately when portfolios were announced, the Awami League ministers disputed their allotments and resigned *en bloc*. It was in the midst of this chaos that the Army appeared on the scene.

CHAPTER XIII

East-West Equation

What happened at the Centre had inevitable repercussions on the provinces. The Central Government had always the power to act against nonconformist provincial governments. M.A. Khuhro of Sind was the first to taste of the Centre's power to depose provincial chiefs. When it suited Liaquat Ali he was released from *Proda* and made Chief Minister. But again when Khuhro proved unaccommodating he suffered the same *Proda* disabilities and went into political eclipse. The Central power was so decisive that provincial governments always wanted to be on the right side of the powers that be at the Centre. A Prime Minister was always in a position to induct into a provincial government of his choice. Nazimuddin installed Firoz Khan Noon in place of Mumtaz Daultana in the Punjab at a time when Noon was not remotely connected with provincial politics; he was away in Dacca as Governor of East Pakistan. What is more, the moment Noon was put in the *gaddi* of Chief Ministership, all the erstwhile followers and admirers of the former Chief Minister swore allegiance to the new incumbent. The magnetism of power to Pakistani practitioners of politics had a classic manifestation when the Khan Sahib ministry of West Pakistan survived the no-confidence motion by only one vote, the casting vote of the Chairman, to find on the morrow that it had acquired a majority of over a hundred against

its Muslim League rivals. The worst abuse of this central power against the province of course occurred when Prime Minister Bogra removed the newly-formed popular Fazlul Huq Ministry of the United Front, on the charge of treason against the Chief Minister for his alleged statements which purported to demand independence for East Pakistan. The country, at least the Western part, supported the Prime Minister's action only to see him a year later in the posture of a beggar for support from the same deposed Chief Minister. The "traitor" was later made the governor of the province. As time passed however the provinces had their revenge. With the approach of general elections, the power shifted to provincial centres. Those who controlled the provinces had a good chance to control the Centre. The new Constituent Assembly or the National Assembly, as it was styled, came to be controlled by the provinces. The Awami League and the United Front from East Pakistan as well as the Muslim League and the Republican Party from West Pakistan had their centre of gravity fixed in their respective provincial spheres. It was in the wake of a provincial contest between the Republicans and the Muslim League that Choudhri Mohammed Ali's government was upset. Therefore for those in power at the Centre, it was of the utmost importance that the men at the provincial ends must be their supporters. Since Mohammed Ali Bogra was not well disposed to Suhrawardy, he did his best to weaken the Awami League in the province even though he had to eat back all he had said against Fazlul Huq, whose party, K.S.P., (Krishak Saramik Praja) he was determined to boost up in power. The same motives set off the struggle in West Pakistan. The Republicans were resolved to maintain their authority in the province. For

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the same reason the Muslim League leader, Daultana, never felt happy at the Centre. It was in the province where the ultimate battle for power could be decided and he stuck to that central forum of political struggle.

There was however a difference in the consequences of the struggle for power which was going on in East and West Pakistan. The Eastern province was compact and homogeneous, having known only one administration from the inception of Pakistan, though the Sylhet division was added to it from Assam on partition. Since it was at a distance from the Centre which was at Karachi, it also felt distant and it helped to modulate an identity of its own. And because it was less developed than West Pakistan—both parts were actually far behind other non-Muslim parts of old India by virtue of a deliberate British policy to keep the Muslims at a lower rung of progress—East Pakistan did not take long to divert some of their old resentment against the Hindus to West Pakistan with which the Centre was indentified. This process of attitudinisation to the West was sharpened by the activities of the Hindus and Communists who received inspiration from the not distant Calcutta, which had during the present century become a sort of cynosure of Bengali culture. And although this culture was primarily influenced and shaped by Hindu thinking, it had its pull for all those who loved Bengali music and literature. On top of it all was an inefficient provincial government whose main endeavour in creating an appeal to the public lay in abusing the Centre for neglecting the province, even though that Centre was in the hands of the same party and after Liaquat Ali Khan, in that of an East Pakistani, Nazimuddin, who was followed by yet another

East Pakistani, Mohammed Ali Bogra. And of course after Choudhri Mohammed Ali came Shurawardy. In the last Central Government of Noon before the Revolution the Awami League influence was predominant.

The purpose of recital of these facts is not to go into the merits and demerits of the East Pakistan grievances—many of them were well-founded—but to show the factors which went to mould the entity of the province. This anti-western climate, in the spreading of which the Muslim League leaders who were in power took no less a hand than the opposition parties of Suhrawardy and Fazlul Huq, and which was a staple of East Pakistan politics, gave the province a kind of stability of character and familiarity of image. The bone of contention between the parties was normal, that is, attainment of power. When the Muslim League fell, the facade of the United Front broke to give shape to a new struggle between the Awami League and the K.S.P., which were the main constitutents of the electoral alliance movement forged by Suhrawardy and Fazlul Huq. The real ideological difference between them all was so small that provincial autonomy which was the main cry at the elections was not implemented by Suhrawardy's government even when it had been largely conceded by Mohammed Ali's constitution. The only party which remained in the field in this demand was Bhashani's National Awami Party, but then it was the function of an extremist opposition to do so. Thus whoever came and went, the province essentially retained its identity and remained untorn by anything other than a normal struggle for power.

This was not so in the West. The province had just

been forged through a bitter struggle of many years. And although there was one Government and one Assembly, the disparateness of its make-up was all too clear. It was in response to the central diktat that the assemblies of the Frontier, Sind, the Punjab, Khairpur and Bahawalpur and local agencies of Baluchistan and Karachi had passed resolutions to the effect of demanding unification. But the leaders of these provinces expected to be in power. Khuhro returned to the chief ministership of Sind after a long period in the political wilderness. Abdur Rashid of the Frontier was included in the West Pakistan government. When Firoz Khan Noon, the Chief Minister of the old Punjab was removed by Governor Gurmani, he promptly gave up the cause of the unit in favour of a zonal federation. When the Muslim League's dream of forming a ministry in West Pakistan did not come true, it turned turtle on the unification of the West. The Republicans and League's desperation to retain and capture votes, for the one to keep in government and the other to topple it, was so great, that the insignificant National Awami Party, with a strength of 10 members in an assembly of 310, came to possess a decisive balance between the two main parties. Both parties wooed it. The price it demanded was disintegration of the Unit. G.M. Syed, its leader who had opposed the Pakistans movement, was imbued with passionate opposition to the unification of the West. It succeeded in making both the main parties commit themselves to a policy of reversing unification. While the Muslim League put its commitment in black and white, perhaps because it was the more desperate of the two, the Republicans promised to make it an issue at general elections. This moderate attitude—it looked moderate against the background

of open clamour against the Unit—did not prevent some of its stalwarts like Ghulam Ali Talpur, a central Republican Minister, from delivering himself of fire and brimstone against the unification. The interesting thing is that while it was argued that those who enacted western unification did not have mandate from the people, the critics hesitated to submit the issue to the determination of the people at the general elections. If the unrepresentative character of the National Assembly forbade it to enact unification, how could the equally unrepresentative opponents in a minute minority order its disintegration. That an immediate undoing of the Unit was demanded could only be due to the fear that the people would endorse it at the general elections.

President Mirza was not helping matters at all. He talked of changes in the Constitution. Of course he wanted changes of the kind that would suit his ambition to be the supreme arbiter. But once changes were mooted, of one kind or the other, the whole framework of the Constitution was bound to be put in jeopardy. The question of Western unification could also be opened. Thus Iskander Mirza's talk of changes in the Constitution suited those who wanted primarily to undo the unit. To make confusion worse confounded, in July 1958 the President had a meeting with Ghaffar Khan, the so-called Frontier Gandhi, who was not only the most unreconciled enemy of the Unit but the principal advocate of Pukhtoonistan, the Pathan statehood. The meeting, as was natural, and indeed as it was intended, was followed by a spate of rumours. It was said that the President had reached an agreement with Ghaffar Khan that the Unit would be un-

done. In any case, the President succeeded in creating an air of extreme instability and uncertainty. Indeed he perfected the art of making loose statements about the Constitution and holding top emergency meetings here, there and everywhere which kept the provincial and central ministers constantly on the move, with the sole purpose of keeping the people guessing, in a state of bewilderment and insecurity. Iskander Mirza's attitude suited the anti-Unit elements admirably. And both pinned their hopes on the existing National Assembly which could be manoeuvred, for it seemed certain that a newly elected parliament would not be amenable to the influence of either of them.

With the exit of Governor Gurmani, the hold of those in the Provincial Assembly who stood for the disintegration of the unit increased manifold. The National Awami Party of G.M. Syed came to still greater prominence. When it was all too clear that the Muslim League could not oust the Republicans, its leaders thought it wise from the public point of view —there was severe criticism in the Press of their pusillanimous attitude on the Unit—to take up a firmer stand and consequently the Muslim League Council resolved at Dacca to suppoıt Western unificiation at the general elections. It was also helped in this attitude by Suhrawardy's decision to allow no changes in the Constitution until after the election. Actually this was a crystallization of struggle between President Mirza and those who stood against his ambitions. It is a sad reflection that the highest in the land should have sought to undo a Constitution so soon after its framing. If the political leaders were burdened with something other than an intense, aim of gaining power, they could have easily stayed the hand of disruption. But this was not to be.

It will therefore be seen that while party politics in East Pakistan did not involve any fundamental disruption in the province, the very fate of West Pakistan was involved in party politics. Every political move had its repercussions on its integrity. And that is why the political struggle in West Pakistan unleashed intense passions. The struggle was all the more complex because while West Pakistan had no say in the affairs of East Pakistan—the West conceded to the East in its demand for making Bengali a State language and joint electorate—politicians from that province exercised every say in Western affairs. Nazimuddin and his followers were set against Western unification. When they failed to press into service their pattern of constitution which multiplied division in the West, they began to raise the holy slogans of a unitary system. The end was the same, destruction of the Unit. Field Marshal (then General) Mohammed Ayub's action had the effect of saving Western unification as much from the hands of its provincialist opponents as from President Mirza whose policy and course of action would have had the same inevitable result. It was essential for Mirza to side with the opponents of the Unit for they alone stood for subjecting the Constitution to changes and could in exchange for his support give him the arbitary powers that he sought. The two were natural allies to each other.

CHAPTER XIV

Whither Democracy ?

For one passionately given to democracy, for one who suffered in the cause of freedom of expression and opinion, it is a terrible admission to make that after eight long years of close observation of the way things were going in Pakistan, the present writer gave up all hopes of seeing democracy flourish in the country. As time passed there was less and less coherence in thinking on total, national affairs. It was all individualism. One could invoke no general principle for wider response or applicability. If one joined a political party it was purely with the thought of self-aggrandisement. And of course no one joined a party in opposition, unless it was on the point of assuming power. Somehow the meaning of democracy was understood in the sense of anarchy. It was not seen that the system depended on the existence of two or three massive competitive bodies raised on the basis of clear socio-economic programme for the well-being of the people. People remain members of a party for a life-time sharing its fortunes, up or down. It is constancy in loyalty which gives sense to a party's outlook. The Socialists in Britain had to wait for over 40 years before they were able to have their government in their own right. The failure was however at the top. The only man who stood above any threat of challenge to his leadership was Liaquat Ali Khan. He took his position for granted and neglected the party organisation. Any opposition that sprang

up he curbed. Under Nazimuddin the party was existent only in the Constituent Assembly where its only business was to maintain the government. After having been elected the President of the League, he forgot to nominate his Working Committee. He resurrected it only when he was deposed and refused to part with presidentship, which, going by the precedent, could hardly be for purposes of building up the organisation. Mohammed Ali Bogra was a political lightweight who was given his premiership on a platter. He inherited the Muslim League parliamentary party which consisted of those who had not forgiven Ghulam Mohammed for the dismissal of Nazimuddin and soon came to control him. All this went on within the confines of the narrow and moribund waters of the Constituent Assembly, which was daily receding from contact with the nation. The Muslim League caucus, consisting more or less of the same people who were the members of the defunct Constituent Assembly, gave battle to their own Prime Minister, Choudhri Mohammed Ali, for no other reason than that he did not belong to their coterie. They were motivated by their original resentment against Ghulam Mohammed with whom Mohammed Ali was associated, rather than any broader loyalty to the organisation. Party loyalty counted for nothing ; it was the personal, individual feeling and cause which mattered above everything. It was not beneath the dignity of a senior Central minister to make use of official machinery for the publication in the press of a forged document in order to discredit a dangerous political rival. The attenuated and rarified climate of politics may be judged by the fact that the legislative assembly of the newly-formed province of West Pakistan was drawn from among the dissolved provincial assemblies whose members were quickened

to life for no other purpose than to elect the new assembly on the district-wise basis. This restricted franchise often resulted in four members of a certain district electing six members of the new assembly. The rulers were simply not prepared to go out of the old grooves. Thus the assemblies which were elected in 1946 on a franchise of 14 per cent provided the electoral college for the election of an assembly in 1956. Perhaps the only legislature which had some freshness about it was of East Pakistan. It was elected in 1953. But it was entirely a non-League assembly and was made up of so many groups that no party was in a commanding majority to form a stable government. The stormy character of this Assembly was shown by the murder of its deputy Speaker in 1958.

It has been said that if general elections were held at frequent periods, things would have settled on a democratic pattern. That might have been possible if the Constitution had been got ready in the atmosphere of national solidarity in the first or second year of Pakistan's emergence. Then the issues of narrow provincialism were not current. East Pakistan had even accepted Urdu as the only state language. The people were only conscious of their triumph and of their brotherly relationship. When that moment was missed; when that national consciousness was dulled, the atmosphere changed. Not only differences arose but they were cashed on for padding up the seats of leadership. The general elections in East Pakistan were fought on an anti-West ticket. In the West the Assembly was thick with anti-Unit feelings and elections would have been fought in a bitterly provincial atmosphere. Moreover there was a manoeuvre on the part of every party to get into power. Unless it had a share in the

control of governmental machinery it could not hope to make any showing in the elections. No party had a standing in the public. And some smaller ones which were springing up and had some backing could not hope to compete against the government agents. The people were not unfamiliar with the fact that the party in power could easily interfere with ballot boxes if its authoritative agent had not proved persuasive enough before. The landlord and police were true vote getters in the rural areas. The votes in towns were too insignificant to make any difference, even if—and this is a big if—they were cast judiciously. The climate in the country had by 1958 changed and the people were torn apart by provincial bickerings. And since there was no popular party whose writ was accepted and obeyed, the election had no chance of returning a parliament capable of giving a stable government. The political parties were depending on controlling elections among themselves on an agreed basis, perhaps also for the reason that they were not prepared for the opening of Pandora's box in the event of free elections. Free elections would have truly reflected the environs of chaos and divisions created by the ruling philosophy of individualism and self. If at the time of going to the polls—which were later scheduled for March 1959—there were five or six distinguishable groups in the National Assembly, they would have been easily multiplied by 10 if not more in the new parliament—that is, were the elections free. What was the prospect of a united country in that likely event ? The truth is that the democratic system works only because of the presence of solid political parties which have roots among the people, which operate all the year round

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and not only at the election time. On the eve of election in 1959, there was not one party which could claim to exist in the true sense of the word, let alone command massive support. How could solidarity result from these conditions of anarchy ? If democracy had to go on—that is the sham which had already been at work—the only way it could be rendered harmless was one which could allot to the parties their proportionate share of seats in the next parliament, and that was indeed what they seemed to have in mind. Hence the scuffle to get in the government, to make sure. That was the only practical way of keeping confusion within bounds.

The time for action was ripe long ago. On the evidence of President Ayub Khan, the late Governor-General Ghulam Mohammed asked him to take over in 1954. It shows the President's democratic predilection that he declined the offer. But no doubt developments proved compulsive. One can only say that the action did not come a moment too soon. If the Army had not intervened, Pakistan's disintegration seemed certain. No one pretends, least of all Preseident Ayub Khan, that the present situation is ideal. That a Constitution Commission is at work, unhampered and uninfluenced by political agitation, indicates that the regime is in search of a stable pattern of governance in which the people's will may be expressed. That system, once conceived and fashioned, may operate soon. But the point just now is the country cried for peace and order, for a moment of reflection, rest and rehabilitation. Pakistani people possess a deep sense of solidarity. It was their solidarity which Quaid-i-Azam harnessed to the purpose of achieving Pakistan, an objective which looked fantastic and forlorn not long before and an objective

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which in any case ran against the grain of the British and Hindu powers. It was nevertheless achieved within the space of seven years. The first post-partition decade blew that historic solidarity to bits. This is in short the achievement and handiwork of Quaid's followers, among which the Muslim League ought to be assigned a lion's share. President Ayub Khan's task is simply to restore that solidarity. It is as Muslims that the people created Pakistan, not as Punjabis, Bengalis, Pathans, Sindhis and Baluchis. The country can move to its proper destiny and rise to its full stature only in the keeping of that original personality.